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DESCARTES ON BODY AND MIND: AFTER 300 YEARS¹

DOROTHY EMMET

RENÉ DESCARTES died on February 11th, 1650. This is therefore a fitting time at which to commemorate him, and I should like to do so tonight by looking at what he had to say about the relation between body and mind: to try to see what his views meant in the context of the philosophy and science of his own time, and what they look like in the light of some of the things which we are saying now. For this question — the relation between body and mind — is still very much with us, as discussions of the so-called 'Mind of Mechanical Man' have shown. Some of us may suspect that the question is likely to be with us for a long time. But there are some things which we can see with more or less assurance today which Descartes could not see. And Descartes saw some things which his predecessors could not see, and which made his work one of the turning points in philosophy, particularly in the philosophy of science. Moreover, his view on the relation between mind and body was not just an incidental part of his philosophy. M Étienne Gilson, his great French commentator, has gone so far as to say that it is its centre. At any rate it was a part to which he attached the greatest importance. He was continually returning to it, and one of his last writings, *Les Passions de l'Âme*, a book on what we might call the physiology of the emotions, was published in November 1649, only a few months before his death. This probably represented his final opinions, because when the Cambridge Platonist philosopher Henry More asked Descartes if he would write something to him about the union of soul and body, Descartes sent him *Les Passions de l'Âme*.

But first something about Descartes himself, since he was one of those philosophers about whom we can say that the manner of his life and the manner of his philosophy were characteristic of each other. Both were highly independent. His thinking developed from a few simple convictions and depended very little either on reading or on discovering the views of other people. He did indeed carry on a considerable correspondence, but he tried to use it in order to put his own position more clearly, and in order to do this he took trouble in answering the objections of his critics. But his interest was in the advancement of thought, and he tried hard to keep out of engagements or controversies which would distract him. He was

¹ The Sir Samuel Hall Oration in the University of Manchester, given on March 2nd, 1950.

in fact drawn into controversy, both theological and scientific, *malgré lui*, as it was probably almost impossible for a man of the seventeenth century not to be, if he had anything very new to say. But his motto was *Bene qui latuit bene vivit* (he lives well who keeps well out of sight). 'I am not so much a barbarian', he writes, 'as not to like people if they think of me to have a good opinion of me. But I should much prefer them not to think about me at all.'

He came of a military and diplomatic family in Poitiers, with some independent means, and was educated at the Jesuit College of La Flèche. He estimates his education for us in the first part of the *Discours de la Méthode*: 'I was aware that languages are necessary to the understanding of the ancients; that the grace of fable stirs the mind; that the memorable deeds of history elevate it; and if read with discretion, aid in forming the judgment... that poetry has ravishing graces and delights; that in mathematics there are many refined discoveries eminently suited to gratify the inquisitive, as well as to further the arts and lessen the labour of man; that numerous highly useful precepts and exhortations to virtue are contained in treatises on morals; that theology points out the path to heaven; that philosophy affords the means of discoursing with an appearance of truth on all matters, and commands the admiration of the more simple; that jurisprudence, medicine and the other sciences secure for their cultivators honours and riches; and in fine that it is useful to bestow some attention upon all, even upon those abounding the most in superstition and error, that we may be in a position to determine their real value and guard against being deceived.' But he 'was especially delighted with the mathematics on account of the certitude and evidence of their reasonings', and 'was astonished that foundations so strong and solid should have no loftier superstructure reared on them'. He was evidently taught a good deal of mathematics at La Flèche; and the boys seem to have been encouraged to take an interest in contemporary science. We read of the school holding a celebration of Galileo's discoveries with the telescope in 1609. (This was of course before the *System of the Two Worlds* was condemned by the Holy Office.)

But it seemed to Descartes to have been an education which produced culture of mind rather than helped forward the discovery of new truth. And as a young man he decided not to stay on at a university, but to go into the army where he would be more likely to have time to think. Indeed the life of a gentleman mercenary in the wars of the seventeenth century seems to have given ample opportunities for leisure, particularly during winter months. So, saying that he determined in this way to 'seek the science of the knowledge of myself and of the great book of the world', Descartes enlisted in foreign armies, first in the Low Countries, and then with

Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, on the Danube. It was, he says, when he was returning to the army (of Maximilian), and the setting in of winter (1619-20) arresting him in a place where he found no company to entertain him, nor any cares and preoccupations, he remained all day shut up in a room by a stove and thought out the first principles of his celebrated Method. The 'poêle' was probably an alcove near one of those big porcelain stoves you find in Central Europe. Descartes's mind seems to have worked best when he was thoroughly warm. He also worked best when lying in bed late in the morning (it seems he was encouraged to do this when a schoolboy at La Flèche). And when he was forced to break with these habits, it was his undoing. For at the age of fifty-six, against his better judgment, he succumbed to pressure put on him by people in high life to accept an invitation to go to Stockholm as tutor of Queen Christina of Sweden. That tiresome woman expected him to tutor her at 5 a.m.; and, getting up early and going to the Palace in the bitter cold of a Swedish winter, he contracted what was probably pneumonia and died on February 11th, 1650, only three months after he had arrived in Stockholm.

However, for the twenty years of his most productive work he found a way of living exactly to his taste. He went to live in Amsterdam, where he could be tolerably secure against interruptions, since his neighbours were all much too occupied with their businesses to take any notice of him, and, so, he writes, 'I have been enabled to live without being deprived of any of the conveniences to be had in the most populous cities, and yet as solitary and retired as in the midst of the most remote deserts.'

His philosophy, I have said, was of a piece with this manner of living. It develops from within outwards, from a few simple convictions. He did not want people with whom to collaborate: a work made by one man, he said, is generally more satisfactory than one made by many. But this was not selfish isolation; it was the deliberate policy of a man who knew just what he was after and did not want to be distracted. He was after a method of unifying philosophy with the mathematical and physical sciences so that they could go forward together, and by 'go forward' he meant not only produce theoretical unification but also lead to practical and technological progress; and, theorist as he was, he could talk like Francis Bacon (whom he had read) about the importance of the useful arts for the relief of man's estate. The two studies which were his closest interest were mathematics and anatomy, and in his views on body and mind we see what happened when he brought these two interests together. In mathematics he was impressed by the way a great deal can be derived from a very little, and that little transparently clear. He also saw that work needed to be done in unifying different

branches of mathematics, and in his work on analytic geometry he was bringing together algebra and geometry by his method of co-ordinates: ('Cartesian' co-ordinates, as we call them.)

He saw the power of mathematical methods in the new physical science as it was being developed by Galileo and Kepler perhaps even more clearly than they could. Gilson has said that owing to his education at La Flèche, Descartes went straight from the scholastic science he was taught there to the science of the seventeenth century, and that he knew very little of the Renaissance science. If this is so, it may have helped him to see so clearly what was the issue between the new and the scholastic science, whereas Renaissance scientists like Leonardo and Jean Fernel (the great physiologist of the mid-sixteenth century) were still moving away from scholasticism and able to live in half-way houses.

The main issue was the rejection of what the scholastics called substantial forms as explanations of any physical process. According to this type of explanation things were alive because they were informed by living principles; they grew because of vegetative and sensitive faculties. Even Fernel would have said a body is alive because it is vivified by living principles. The scholastic Aristotelian world of nature was a world of concrete substances, with their qualities, their colours, sounds and weights. Descartes called this a generalization of the child's view of the world; and here he was surely right. This concrete qualitative way of thinking about the world is in line with primitive thought. That need not mean it is worthless; it may be saying something important for certain purposes, artistic for instance or practical, but it is not the way of thinking about the world which is important for physical science. For physical science Descartes saw the importance of correlating qualities with quantitative relations which could be expressed in mathematical terms. So he tried to explain physiology, whether animal or human, in terms of mechanical models. To quote a passage: 'I want you to regard these functions as taking place naturally in this machine [i.e. the human body] because of the very arrangement of its parts, neither more nor less than do the movements of a clock or other automaton from the weights and wheels, so that there is no need on their account to suppose in it any soul vegetative or sensitive or any principle of life other than its blood.'

Descartes, as we shall see, expressly excluded the mind from the mechanical part of his machine-man. But apart from this, his man was a machine. We are sufficiently used to the idea of machines to miss in part the seventeenth-century force of the word in this connection. 'By it', writes Sherrington, 'Descartes said more perhaps than by any other word he could have said, more that was revolutionary for biology in his time and fraught with change which came

to stay.' Men were machines plus minds; animals were machines without minds and so without consciousness; that was the difference.

Descartes refers to elaborate mechanical figures which seem to have been attached to fountains in fashionable gardens. When visitors came upon a figure of a bathing Diana, they might step unawares on some contraption which would make her run away and hide in the rushes; and if they tried to pursue her, they might tread on something else which would make a Neptune step out and threaten them with a trident; or a marine monster might jump out and spurt water in their faces. (These ingenious and expensive diversions in the classical style sound very much part of the age of Louis Quartorze — though Descartes is of course writing a little earlier.) In his book, *De L'Homme* Descartes describes what a man might be like if he were body without mind; a Robot man who carries out the physiological functions of digestion, respiration, circulation, has 'memory', as a storage system of habits, but no consciousness or powers of verbal communication.

The automaton, whether the imaginary human Robot, or an actual animal, was worked by the mechanical action of the nervous system. Nervous impulses, which Descartes thought of as a very tenuous kind of gas, and called 'animal spirits', ran up tubes inside the nerve fibres to the brain and thence down the motor nerves. It was not Descartes, but Willis, Professor of Medicine at Oxford, writing rather later, who described automatic responses as 'reflex' acts (using that word) but the idea is implicit in Descartes's view. Moreover, Sherrington points out that he made a guess which was to be borne out two centuries later; he 'postulated an activity which suppressed activity. It waited for factual confirmation until the nineteenth century. Then at first it was not believed. Descartes had made this postulate when thinking out his supposed Robot man and how it should work. The nerves of the muscles which turn the eyeball sidewise he had particularly in mind. Those muscles are arranged as antagonists. Instead of one pulling against the other, he supposed one paid out as the other drew in. It was paid out by inhibiting its activity. He was right'.

So Voltaire's quip that Descartes wanted to think out *a priori* how nature worked — 'au lieu d'étudier la nature, il voulut la deviner' — was not altogether fair comment. Such fruitful guesses are only likely to be made by those who are deeply at home in the subject matter. But Descartes's intention, guided by his capacity to imagine mechanical explanations for physiological processes, let him down when he tried to explain the circulation of the blood. He knew of Harvey's work and was one of the few of his contemporaries to accept it in principle. But he parted company with Harvey over the explanation of the beating of the heart. Harvey had said the heart

was a muscle expanding and contracting, and thereby driving the blood into the main artery. But why should it go on contracting with rhythmic regularity? Harvey spoke of a *vis pulsifica*; but this smacked to Descartes of the scholastic type of explanation in terms of occult principles, which he was out to supersede. So he reverted to the older Aristotelian conception of the heart as hotter than the rest of the body, as this seemed to suggest a mechanical explanation for its expansion and contraction¹. This was taken for granted and shows how difficult it is to correct a wrong idea, once a great name has started it off wrong. According to Descartes's account the blood entering the right auricle drips through into the right ventricle, where the greater heat of the heart causes it to dilate and forces it out into the pulmonary artery to the lungs which are a refrigerating system. The cooled blood flows back through the pulmonary vein into the left auricle, whence it again steams with the heat as it passes into the left ventricle thus causing the heart to dilate and propel it into the main artery. (Incidentally on Descartes's account, the blood is expelled on the diastole, which he explains as due to dilation, and not expelled on the contraction of the heart, the systole, as is the case.) Here, then, the urge to find a mechanical model led him astray. He wrote: 'If we think of the movement of the heart as Harvey does, we not only have to imagine some faculty to cause this movement, which is much more difficult to imagine than are the things it pretends to explain; but we have to suppose in addition other faculties which change the qualities of the blood when it is in the heart.' (He had not understood the pulmonary circulation.) 'Instead, by considering merely the dilation of the blood which necessarily follows from the heat *which everyone knows is greater in the heart than in the other parts of the body*, one sees clearly that this dilation alone is sufficient to move the heart in the way in which experiments show that it changes, and moreover as one imagines that it must be changed if the blood is to be prepared and rendered more suitable to furnish nourishment to all the body and to be serviceable for all the other uses it has in the body in a way that does not call for the supposition of any unknown or strange faculties.'

Descartes was misled by constructing a mechanical theory which was not backed by observation. But it would be unfair to think of him, as is sometimes done, as a mathematician and theorist not interested in observations. When he was living in Amsterdam he

¹ ARISTOTLE, *De Partibus Animalium* 670:

'The heart then and the liver are essential constituents of every animal: the liver that it may effect concoction, the heart that it may lodge the central source of heat. For some part or other there must be which, like a hearth, shall hold the kindling fire, and this part must be well protected, seeing that it is, as it were the citadel of the body.'

used to go to butchers' shops to get organs for dissection and even used to attend at slaughter houses. He once said of a calf he was dissecting, 'Here is my whole library', a testimony to his reliance on first hand thinking and observation, and not on books. But he was not an experimentalist. He said of himself that he could look at things, but lacked the hands for making delicate experiments. And he does not seem to have realized the need to devise ingenious experiments; he thought that fairly simple observations ought to make it possible to decide between alternative hypotheses. On the whole he thought the facts were fairly simple to discover; the problem was to find explanations. Here he resembled his scholastic opponents, only he was interested in a different kind of explanation. And he did not think that experiment was profitable unless one knew what to expect before making it.

His ideal was a unified science based on a few simple principles, such that when it was complete, the correct causal explanations would be seen to follow as logical implications. But he realized that until this ideal was attained, experiment was necessary. We may agree that he was right in thinking that there is a place in science for deductive systems expressed in mathematical terms, provided that these have predictive power. But we may be more doubtful about his ideal of the single deductive system, because we may wonder whether any one set of primary axioms can be adequate for every type of scientific explanation. Descartes did not distinguish sufficiently between principles as intellectual tools, conventions of which it may be necessary to use different sets for different purposes, and principles which could be interpreted in a simple realistic sense. To him what could be clearly and distinctly conceived must exist as such; and therefore the 'simple natures', the analytically irreducible ideas in terms of which he thought any explanation should be framed, were thought of realistically (though some of the examples he gives of 'simple natures', 'equal', 'like', 'straight', 'cause', sound much more like what we might want to call categories — part of our intellectual apparatus — than they sound like real entities). For Descartes, to 'explain' anything was to show how a set of these 'simple natures' could be combined in it. He did not distinguish, any more than did his scholastic opponents, between realistic descriptions and working abstractions. But there was this distinction between Descartes's type of explanation and theirs. The substantial forms of the scholastics could not be isolated and observed, and nor could Descartes's 'simple natures'. But to work with the latter, interpreted quantitatively and mathematically, was to gain predictive power which the scholastic type of explanation, put in qualitative and concrete terms, lacked.

Descartes's method was based on the postulate that what can be

clearly and distinctly conceived is true. This sounds like an expression of faith in the validity of formalized deductive reasoning. But just as we may come to see that formalized deductive reasoning can only be operated within some context of purposes or assumptions, and also that in operating it, we must be able to trust our memories in passing from one intuitively evident step to the next, similarly Descartes was not prepared to leave his postulate of the validity of clear and distinct ideas standing on its own feet. He was able to satisfy himself by a theistic argument that God existed and was not a cheat and deceiver, and that therefore we might believe that if we followed what we could understand clearly and distinctly we should not be misled. Descartes's arguments for God are not our concern here; but, whatever we make of his theistic language, is it altogether fanciful to look on it as his way of saying that formalized thinking is in practice operated in a context in which there are also unformalized elements such as memory and convictions, for instance the conviction that the process is working accurately, and that we have to be able to take these convictions for granted? That is to say, in actual operation formalized thinking does not entirely eliminate the need to appeal to some assumptions outside the formal system itself. You have at least got to be able to believe that you have gone through the operations correctly, and analogously, if a computing machine is being operated, you have to believe that it is working accurately. And I think Descartes's appeal to a need for a 'guarantee' of clear and distinct ideas may partly have been a recognition of something of this sort.

Be this as it may, Descartes thought that he was entitled to assume not only that what he could clearly and distinctly conceive was true, but also where he could clearly distinguish two conceptions from each other, the objects corresponding to them existed in distinction in actual reality. And his conceptions of body and mind seemed to him clear and distinct ideas of this kind. We have been considering his idea of body, and seeing that he understood it in terms of a mechanism. Indeed, owing to a defective theory of motion and of inertia, he believed that it was possible to derive mechanical laws from geometrical properties alone, and therefore he defined Matter in terms of Extension. He thought the behaviour of bodies could be explained in terms of the primary qualities, the laws of space and motion, and that both minds and what we call the secondary qualities (colours, tastes, sounds) could be kept out of the description of physical nature. The way was thus open for his mechanistic physiology. But he was not prepared to say that matter so described was the only kind of existent, or, as he called it, Substance. For he was equally, in fact even more indubitably, convinced that he had a clear and distinct idea of Mind, a different kind of Substance whose

characteristic was to think. He was still more assured of this than of his idea of Matter, for whereas he found that he could doubt whether his idea of Extension was anything but an idea, and perhaps a deceptive one, he could not doubt that he was doubting, and doubting is a form of thinking. So he postulates minds and bodies as two completely different kinds of thing, and thus the way was open to a mechanistic science of nature on the one hand, and on the other hand to a belief in the reality of thought, and indeed a belief in the freedom and responsibility of the human mind. There were indeed those among his contemporaries who wanted to go further, notably Hobbes and Gassendi, who were trying to give a thoroughgoing mechanistic account of thinking itself. Gassendi corresponded with Descartes about the meaning of his saying '*Cogito ergo sum*', and he addresses him in mocking irony as 'O Mind' (*Mens*). Descartes replies in like vein, addressing Gassendi as 'O Flesh' (*Caro*). On one occasion the Marquis of Newcastle, a nobleman with philosophical interests, invited Descartes to dinner in Paris, to meet Hobbes and Gassendi. One wonders how the conversation went, whether they went on addressing each other like this.

For Descartes consciousness was a primary datum, and thinking was *sui generis* and not to be explained away. Rather than do so, he preferred to believe that there could be two different kinds of existence in the world; that there are bodies and there are minds, and since we can clearly think of them as distinct, neither can be reduced to the other. Such has probably been generally assumed by common sense ever since. Professor Ryle indeed says in his recent book that this has only been a theory of those whose business it is to theorize, and ordinary people (as shown by our common ways of speaking) have never believed it. But I am not so sure. I think dualistic ways of talking about minds and bodies are pretty deeply embedded in our ordinary ways of speaking.

But what a problem it raises, and a problem which Descartes was great enough not to evade. For if body and mind are two completely different kinds of thing, at any rate they form a unity in us of a peculiarly intimate kind, so that we think of ourselves as one person and not a mind attached to a body. As Whitehead says, we say 'Here am I', not 'Here am I, and I have brought my body with me'. Descartes saw this, and said that a human person was a composite of body and mind. These were two separate natures, since they could be clearly thought of as separate (or so he thought). Their unity was one of 'composition'—a kind of unity which he was certainly unable to conceive clearly and distinctly, and yet he held on to it as a fact. Some of his successors tried to make his views seem more logically consistent at the cost of producing a surely quite incredible theory known as Occasionalism. Body is

extension and mind is thinking activity, and there can be no interaction between two such different orders of existence. But nevertheless when the body is affected in a certain way, God uses this as an occasion to call up a certain idea in the mind. So certain physical vibrations are at present being produced as a result of movements in my larynx, and causing finally vibrations within your inner ears. At the same time I am hoping that I am indulging in some sort of process which might be called thinking, and it is just possible that you may be also indulging in a similar process which may bear some relation to what I am thinking. But there is no relation whatever between the physical series of events produced by my speech and the intellectual series of your thoughts and mine except that God uses the occasion of the one to make us think of the other. If they run in what seem like a parallel series, this is not because of causal interaction, but because God has synchronized them, rather like a cinema film and a sound track (I remember once seeing a film where the synchronizing was imperfect, and a sound was heard whenever a speaker shut his mouth, and vice versa).

But Descartes did not go in for the extravagancies of Occasionalism. He held on to his belief that body and mind, though metaphysically distinct, also make a unity in fact. In his *Les Passions de l'Âme* he discussed the emotions which states of the body produce in the mind, and the effect of states of mind on certain bodily functions, such as digestion. Moreover, there was the persistent problem of the so-called secondary qualities, colours, sounds, tastes, odours, which seem to be Displaced Persons in both the mental and material worlds. For the material world had as its real properties the mathematically measurable properties of figure and motion; and the mental world in itself was an activity of pure thinking, and not of sensory impressions. Descartes says that to understand the physical world, we must turn to reasoning and calculation to correct the appearances to our senses. 'Thus for example', he says, 'I find in my mind two wholly diverse ideas of the sun; the one by which it appears extremely small draws its origin from the senses, and should be placed in the class of adventitious ideas; the other, by which it seems to be many times larger than the whole earth, is taken up on astronomical grounds, that is elicited from certain notions.' 'Adventitious ideas' include what we should call sensations. 'If I hear some noise, if I see the sun, if I feel heat, I have so far judged that these sensations proceed from certain things which exist outside me.' In the end sensations, as conscious, must be classed as mental, not physical; but they are a kind of mental occurrence (Descartes would say 'idea', an omnibus word for all mental occurrences) which he thinks depend on the mind's association with the body. Descartes's view seems to be that certain nervous

agitations in the brain causally continuous with stimuli from the outside world occasion the mind to form a conscious sensation. On the whole this is the sensible view; but how many difficulties are covered up by the word 'occasion'? The sensation according to Descartes need not resemble directly either the nervous agitations, or the external object, though it can serve as a clue to practical orientation to the world. For a *theoretic* understanding, we pass from secondary qualities, colours, etc., to an intellectual grasp of unperceived mathematical relations. ('It will be sufficient to remark that the perception of the senses are merely to be referred to this intimate union of the human body and mind, and that they usually make us aware of what, in external objects, may be useful or adverse to this union, but do not present to us these objects as they are in themselves, unless occasionally and by accident').

Descartes had his own theory of the point at which the soul was in contact with the body. (Professor Jefferson has described it fully in his Purser Lecture given in Trinity College, Dublin, last year, on *René Descartes and the Localization of the Soul*.) It was an ingenious theory, consequent on his interest in the central nervous system. In one sense he was prepared to say with the medievals that the soul was united to the body as a whole; but he believed that the mechanism of its action on the body was the nervous system, and the control room, so to speak, was the pineal gland.

He chose this unlikely organ (actually an obsolete light reflector) because it was in the mid-brain, and, he thought, balanced delicately by the animal spirits (he imagined a balloon captive above a fire, or a ball suspended in a jet of water). Also there was only one pineal; it was not duplicated in the two hemispheres, as are the other parts of the brain. This is interesting, since it is the fact that our visual and other sensations are single while the parts of the brain are duplicated which Sherrington cites (*inter alia*) as an indication that mind and brain cannot be the same.

I do not know what force there is in this argument of Sherrington's, but it is interesting to see the same puzzle influencing Descartes in his choice of the pineal. He had seen the pineal in animals; we do not know whether he had seen it in a human being, though he probably had. He writes that he had tried to see it in a woman whose body was being dissected in Leyden; but though he hunted very hard, and knew well where it ought to be, having often found it in freshly killed animals, it was quite impossible to detect it in the woman. He explained this by saying that the gland decomposed very quickly, and that anatomists generally started on examining the intestines and waited several days before opening the head. (Such were the difficulties even for a would-be first hand observer in those days.)

Descartes imagined the pineal as acting as a reflector of impulses

coming up the nerves from the special senses. He imagined the conduction of these impulses as a very subtle volatile gas which he called animal spirits, which was evaporated out of the blood by the heat engine in the heart. It is important to note that he thought the animal spirits were material, though a very tenuous form of matter. He looks on the pineal as a selective organ. In sense perception, a flow of animal spirits from the pineal cause certain nerve pores in the brain to open more widely than others, so that the animal spirits find a channel down these routes and cause the movement of the appropriate muscle. (Professor Jefferson says that Descartes was not very clear on the distinction between sensation and movement, but nor was anyone else at the time.)

In voluntary action the soul in the pineal takes initiative in directing the animal spirits down one route in the nervous system rather than another. In memory, it sends the animal spirits chasing round the brain, until 'they come to traces left by the object which one wants to remember; for these traces are nothing but pores in the brain through which the animal spirits have taken their course before because of the presence of the object, and have acquired thereby a greater facility than other pores to be opened in the same way by the animal spirits when they approach; so that the animal spirits recognize these pores, entering them more easily than others, and as a result they excite a particular movement in the gland, which represents the said object to the soul and makes it recognize that this is what it wishes to remember'. Descartes's idea of the animal spirits may sound fanciful. But remember that the world knew nothing then about electrical impulses, and the plain man still speaks and maybe even thinks of electricity as 'juice'. Also gas came before electricity; so should we be scornful of Descartes for thinking of nervous impulses as a kind of gas passing through the nerve fibres? (Could he have detected that these were not hollow tubes?) He could think of this gas as something material and yet as sufficiently ethereal for the soul in the brain to get a purchase on it and so cause movements — as we might almost say, step on the gas.

What about these attempts on Descartes's part to 'save the appearances', and at the same time to form hypotheses to account for reflex action, voluntary action and memory? The functions of the pineal and the animal spirits were in a sense hypotheses; they were wrong, and could be shown to be wrong; but were thereby a different kind of explanation from the scholastic appeal to sensitive and vegetative principles, which, like all appeals to 'principles' in such connections, were ways of stating a problem posing as explanations, and could not be verified or falsified.

As hypotheses, the location of the soul in the pineal, the animal spirits and the gas engine heart are of antiquarian interest only.

For the rest, we can say that Descartes was making a valiant attempt to give a mechanistic account of the nervous system in its own terms, and at the same time to uphold what seemed to him a primary datum, the fact of consciousness and the possibility of rational thinking. He was trying to hold on to all the various aspects of the problem as he saw them, and not to explain any of them away. He saw the importance of seeking mechanistic explanations in physiology, and of trying to link biology with physics. He saw the difference between the description of the world in terms of mathematical physics, and the qualitative warm, colourful, noisy, smelly world of our conscious sensations, and yet somehow that the one is the clue to the other. He saw the complete difference between conscious sensations, and whatever physico-physiological account may be given of nervous agitations, and yet believed that there was an unexplained link between them. He saw that consciousness is not a postulate or something which can be ignored, since our being conscious is the datum from which we start. And he believed that we are conscious of carrying out a responsible activity of thinking, and that this can be improved by deliberate attention to method. In the end, he just cut the knot and said that there were two ultimately different kinds of thing; there are minds and there are bodies. Yet he went on wrestling with the way in which they form a unity in us. We are compounded of these two kinds of substance, and our sensations, perceptions, emotions are the result of this double nature. And he held on to this unity, although the manner of its composition was anything but a clear and distinct idea.

Are we in a position to do any better than Descartes did? Broad, in *The Mind and its Place in Nature*, lists seventeen different possible views of the relation of mind and body, and we can read through all these and indeed invent a few more, and think of reasons why none of them seems satisfactory. We today seem to have nothing so firm to put forward as Descartes's two-substance theory, and yet we find it very hard to be happy about this dualism, particularly if it leads us to describe a human being as what Professor Ryle has lately called a 'ghost in a machine'. Perhaps the word 'ghost' is hardly fair, as suggesting a wraith or relic, rather than what was to Descartes the very active life of a thinking mind. But Descartes's division does not show satisfactorily the distinction between the living and non-living. We can see this if we consider the question of *consciousness*. Here we seem faced with a dilemma. If we keep consciousness out of the physical world we must say that it makes no difference to biological functions or physical movements. If we allow it to affect biological functions or physical actions (what we ordinarily call the action or influence of mind on matter), we have to allow that the physical world

is queerer than we like to think. Perhaps we are less reluctant to consider this second possibility than Descartes was.

It seems to me that we must say that consciousness is both more deep-seated and more intermittent than Descartes thought. Descartes made it, as we have seen, the distinguishing characteristic of the rational mind, or thinking substance. But, says Locke, and very properly, 'Every drowsy nod refutes those who say that the soul always thinks.' Consciousness seems to be a matter of more or less; not only a matter of thinking at the top of our form, but it shades off down into sensation, organic feelings and dreams. It may depend on the functioning of deeper levels of the brain, and not only on cortical activity. Hence it is so artificial to speak as Descartes does of animals as automata, moved by reflexes, but unconscious because they are (as we suppose) without rational thought. That animals are merely unconscious automata seems to me the hardest to believe of all Descartes's views. In other words, the great division in nature is not only, as Descartes thought, between thinking minds and machines, but there is also a distinction which we cannot ignore between what is living and what is not. It may be difficult to know just where the line is to be drawn. But there are upper limits where we have no doubt that something is alive; and at the human level being alive is bound up with consciousness, which we realize in feelings, appreciations, imagination, and not merely in abstract thought. Descartes connected consciousness with reason, and his thinking substance showed its proper nature in pure thought, particularly of a mathematical kind. It was the capacity to do this which distinguished thinking substance from material substance, and he believed there were no processes in the brain corresponding to or underlying these pure conceptions. But consciousness, we have said, seems to be bound up not only with powers of abstract thought, but with our aesthetic and kinaesthetic powers of feeling, perceiving, imagining. These powers used to be allocated to what was called the irrational part of the soul; and for Descartes we have seen they were displaced persons, not satisfactorily accommodated in either his mental or his material world. We may therefore suspect that he drew his line in the wrong way. Moreover it is from feelings like perceptions, imagination, appreciation, and not from abstract thought, that our experience starts. Descartes saw that such experiences belong somehow to the person as a whole, the unity of composition, as he called it, of soul and body. He held on to this, although he could not explain it satisfactorily on his two-substance theory, a triumph of his good sense over the method of clear and distinct ideas. He did not fall into the temptation of some philosophers, to try to explain away or deny an experience because they have not a satisfactory abstract vocabulary in which to talk about it.

His main limitation was that he did not see as well as we can nowadays that we must distinguish between ultimate distinctions existing in nature and our intellectual apparatus of working abstractions. Nowadays we tend to suspect that where you have a clear and distinct idea, it is likely to belong to the latter rather than to the former. The reality, we think, is likely to be more complex; and we can have different types of explanation in terms of different abstractions which will be valuable for certain purposes; but none will be a literal and realistic description. Separations in thought need not correspond in the same sense to separations in fact. Thus to think in terms of mind and matter as two different kinds of thing may be useful as a manner of speaking in certain contexts; and Descartes rightly saw that for the advance of science people needed to learn to think in terms of mechanical models, and ignore the presence of man as a conscious agent in nature. A science put in mechanical mathematical form had predictive and generalizing power which the old concrete, qualitative ways of thinking of the medievals could never have. Hence it was important to learn to think of matter and mind as though they could be kept rigidly apart from each other. But it need not follow that they are therefore really and ultimately two distinct kinds of thing in mysterious juxtaposition. Possibly of course our reluctance to think they are ultimately distinct may be a prejudice, a mere preference for unity over duality. And certainly the patent difference between our conscious experiences and the physiological accounts of events in the brain makes it very difficult for us not to talk dualistically about mind and body. Sherrington, it seems, is sometimes prepared, particularly in his *Man and his Nature*, to say 'why not?' and write in an almost Cartesian vein about 'mind energy' and 'physical energy' as two ultimately distinct components of the universe. But it may be more correct to think of 'mind' and 'matter' as words for different kinds of activity which are describable in terms of different principles rather than as different things. Or sometimes the same activity may be described in terms of both a mental and a material story, according to how we are looking at it. So a game of billiards could be described in mechanistic terms, according to the impact of one ball on another, or, seen in a wider context, it could be described as a piece of skilful or intelligent play. Professor Ryle in his recent book *The Concept of Mind* has made a most interesting attempt to translate mental operations and processes into adjectives or adverbs describing observable activities like playing a game 'intelligently' or 'skilfully'. This has the great advantage of starting from the person as a whole, and saying that he carries out certain activities such as respiration 'mechanically' and others in ways we could call 'intelligent' or 'unintelligent'. Then we can go on to study the distinctive characteristics of intelligent

action. It is the fear that thinking may come to be described as 'merely reflex' action, and not something which can be controlled intelligently and thereby improved, which has led to what Professor Ryle has called the 'bogy of mechanism'. We can lay this bogy by getting clear about the distinctive characteristics of thinking, and then whether or not we talk of 'mind' as a distinct kind of 'thing' may be largely a matter of words. As Locke put it in his own language, 'it is not much more remote from our comprehension to conceive that God can, if he pleases, superadd to matter a faculty of thinking than that He should superadd to it another substance with the faculty of thinking'. Yet to say that 'matter thinks' is likely to be misleading in so far as it leads us to tend to identify thinking with the kind of behaviour which can be described mechanistically.

And it is perhaps not just a matter of words. For Descartes's conception of the separable immaterial soul certainly made the possibilities of human responsibility and immortality easier to imagine. Nowadays we tend to put the question by asking whether there can be mental events which are independent of neural or physiological events. On the whole the experimental data suggest there are not, though some might be prepared to say that there is now a certain amount of evidence from paranormal phenomena which seems to point the other way. In the deepest sense, I think we must say that the problem still eludes us; and I do not think it can be solved, as is the fashion nowadays, by simply appealing to the uses of language. I think most of us would now say that it is not two things, a body and a mind in juxtaposition, but the unity of a human being in all his functions, thinking, feeling, living, which we are trying to interpret; but that we have as yet no concepts in which to express this satisfactorily, nor anything to put forward in our day as firm as was Descartes's two-substance theory in his.

MR ELIOT'S 'MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL'

PATRICIA M. ADAIR

IF we forget that Mr T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* was written for production at Canterbury, we fail to understand the play. Much of its true significance is lost on the stage. For the theatre is, above all, rich with humanity, vibrating to the suffering and laughter and ecstasy of human beings. Across the footlights the quiver of human emotion passes back and forth from actors to audience, as men and women share the fuller, intenser, more amusing life of the characters who strut and fret, magnified and vivid before them. But what significance has the human figure in the vast, echoing cathedral of Canterbury? At the foot of those tremendous pillars no man is of any stature, no human voice can reach that spreading roof. Every mounting curve and stone proclaim that this is a church, designed for the worship of God, where the tombs of the famous dead and the footsteps of the living are equally unimportant. Is it possible, then, to judge a play written with this setting in mind by ordinary dramatic standards? *Murder in the Cathedral* is a religious drama, the story of Canterbury's most famous saint, with the emphasis laid on Becket's bitter fulfilment of God's purpose rather than on his humanity. Indeed a study of Mr Eliot's sources suggests that he deliberately sacrificed the warmth and vitality and ironic vigour of the Thomas his contemporaries knew, in subjugation to his religious conception of sainthood and martyrdom. He is concerned above all to show us the ways of God to man or perhaps, more truly, the ways of man to God, not only in the twelfth but in the twentieth century, and to that purpose he shapes the life and death of Thomas à Becket. A cold air stirs between the grey pillars, which dwarf the human figure; and the atmosphere of the play is cold and a little rarefied too. Seldom has a work of art been wedded so closely to its setting. The play itself is in two parts, divided by the Sermon, just as the cathedral is built on three levels. The drama has the same clarity of design, the same close-knit, shapely structure, the same compelling inevitability which we feel, when, on entering the great West door of Canterbury, we look straight up the soaring arches of the nave, through the choir to where the candles flicker before the High Altar.

For Mr Eliot the significance of Becket's story lies in the struggle through which a man of proud and indomitable will becomes, at last, an instrument in God's hands. 'The true martyr', he says, 'is he who has lost his will in the will of God and who no longer desires

anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr.' The dramatic problem, of course, is that the more perfect the saint's self-surrender the more difficult it is to keep him a real man, since it is by our weaknesses that we are most human. Moreover, by confining the action of the play to the closing weeks of Becket's life and so forcing him to play a purely passive role, Mr Eliot increases the difficulty of making Thomas entirely credible as a man, but deepens the religious significance of the play. The enemy of the king, the 'meddling priest' is almost lost in the saint. His bitterest temptation is of a rarefied and subtle kind — the desire for the glory of martyrdom rather than the humble acceptance of it as a part of God's design. But in the very recognition of his sin of spiritual pride he conquers it, as he cries with a kind of triumphant humility:

Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain:
Temptation shall not come in this kind again.
The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

We realize the completeness of his surrender to God, but the spiritual exaltation which springs from it is not an experience which many of us can share. The saints move in a different dimension where ordinary human feeling has little significance. Whether this is an advantage to the dramatist is doubtful. We pity most tragic heroes, but it would be an impertinence to pity Becket. Can we even share that wholehearted devotion which he aroused in the people who strewed his way with flowers and plucked his horse's hairs as relics? The Becket of the play is too remote to arouse our love, but, if we turn to the contemporary records, we realize why the common people loved him, for we find the rich humanity of the man which Mr Eliot has, in part, sacrificed.

The Icelandic Thomas Saga tells us of his visits to the hospital at Canterbury to inquire after the sick, and goes on: 'Now meek as he was to those of little might, so much as mighty was he and zealous against the ribald; for anyone beset with hardness of heart, who had to stand under visitations, might well have given much that he had avoided the two things together, namely the omission of his fault and such a chastisement. But, those who sought him with meekness and repentance for their trespasses, yea, even if the law had been grievously broken, met no further with stern accusation as if they had been hard of heart, but soon found what a father they had inwardly in him, who was all ablaze with the fire of love, weeping with those who wept, and that too for this reason that his blessed compassion could not well bear any suffering.' This loving compassion and gentleness is not apparent in the Becket of the play, nor have we seen his refreshing and somewhat sardonic humour. Here

for example, is the beginning of his indignant letter to the bishops of England who had deserted him for the King: 'Thomas, by the Grace of God humble minister of the church of Canterbury, to his reverend brethren in general, by God's grace bishops of the province of Canterbury, if indeed the letter be their joint production, health and grace to act as they have not yet acted.' Becket feared God but certainly no man. He does not hesitate to reproach even the Pope for vacillation in his cause in no uncertain terms: 'Rise, my lord, I pray you and make no longer tarrying . . . earn for yourself a name for ever and restore your endangered reputation.'

The contemporary records of the Archbishop's return to England and the closing weeks of his life are very vivid and dramatic in themselves and Mr Eliot sticks to them faithfully. William Fitzstephen records the famous last words of Becket to the King: 'The king said to him "Go in peace: I will follow you and see you in Rouen or in England as soon as I can."' The archbishop: "My lord, my mind saith to me that I so depart from you as from him whom in this life I shall see no more."' The king: "Dost thou account me a traitor?"' The archbishop: "My lord, that be far from thee."' So the Messenger in *Murder in the Cathedral*, bringing the news of Becket's arrival to Canterbury says,

It is common knowledge that when the Archbishop
Parted from the King, he said to the King,
My Lord, he said, I leave you as a man
Whom in this life I shall not see again.

Fitzstephen also tells us that the text of Becket's first sermon on his return to Canterbury was: 'Here we have no abiding city, but we seek one to come.'

Here is no continuing city, here is no abiding stay,

are the first words of the Chorus before Thomas enters. Herbert of Bosham tells us that the people received him in the streets with cries of 'Hosanna' and adds: 'Then might you see at his first coming into the cathedral the face of this man, which many seeing marked and wondered at, for it seemed as though his heart aflame showed also in his face.' This is probably the glowing account of a fervent disciple but the Thomas of history inspired both great devotion and great hatred. In comparison, the first words the Archbishop speaks in the play strike us with a slight chill:

They know and do not know what it is to act or suffer.
They know and do not know, that action is suffering
And suffering is action. Neither does the agent suffer
Nor the patient act. But both are fixed
In an eternal action -

This is profoundly important to an understanding of the theme of the play — the human will surrendered to the 'eternal action' so that 'the pattern may subsist' and God's purpose be made complete. For Mr Eliot this theme is more important than the humanity of Thomas, so we must not be disappointed that the opening speech of the chief character sounds a little cold and remote and even suspiciously like an exhibition of mental gymnastics on the saint's part. Moreover, Thomas's will is not yet surrendered, he is not yet ready to fit into God's pattern, as we are reminded when the Fourth Tempter ironically throws his own words back at him later.

Edward Grim, who was an eye-witness, gives a vivid account of the murder of Becket and the resemblances of phrasing between his words and the play are so frequent and striking that there can be little doubt that Mr Eliot followed him very closely. Nevertheless, if we consider Mr Eliot's treatment of his sources as a whole, it seems clear that, as I have tried to show, he sacrificed something of Becket's humanity in order to lay the emphasis upon the martyrdom of the saint. I believe there was also another reason. Again and again throughout the play Mr Eliot stresses the timelessness of the theme: 'This is out of life, this is out of time.' If he had made his Archbishop too closely the historical Becket of the twelfth century the play would have lost much of its universality and its impact and meaning for the twentieth century. To think of *Murder in the Cathedral* merely as the story of an archbishop who was murdered for complex historical reasons in the year 1170 is to miss the full import of the play. For Mr Eliot's theme is as deep and timeless as that of *Everyman*. He sees Becket's life and death as one of the many blood-stained pages in the accounts men render to God. The theme is the Christian paradox of death and rebirth, the martyr's expiation for the sins of the world, and through that redemption comes the renewal of salvation for mankind — 'Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' So the Chorus cries:

We thank Thee for Thy mercies of blood, for thy redemption
by blood. For the blood of Thy martyrs and saints
Shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy places.
For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has given his
blood for the blood of Christ,
There is holy ground. . . .

The murderers (with Henry in the background) are the active instruments of evil; but the chorus of women of Canterbury, who represent all humanity, are guilty too. Theirs is the sin of indifference, apathy, evasion of the great issues, the longing to be left in their own small

world, 'living and partly living'. They flee from the relentless pursuing feet of the Hound of Heaven, or, as Mr Eliot puts it,

Human kind cannot bear very much reality.

After the murder their shame and misery and consciousness of guilt reach their climax in the cry for redemption:

Wash the stone, wash the bone, wash the brain, wash the soul,
wash them wash them.

There is no doubt at all that Mr Eliot means us, the twentieth century audience, to share their feelings and echo their cry. He employs a startling and brilliant device to make quite sure we understand that the play has a message for *us*. At the end of Part I he has already made Becket accuse the Chorus (or the audience?) of the sins which make his murder possible. Raking them with his eyes, he says:

But for every evil, every sacrilege,
Crime, wrong, oppression and the axe's edge,
Indifference, exploitation, you, and you,
And you, must all be punished. So must you.

Now, following immediately on the Chorus's cry of 'Wash them', the Knights, having completed the murder, advance to the front of the stage and address the audience. The First Knight begins by appealing to the English sense of fair play and refers to 'the merits of this extremely complex problem'. His urbane, reasonable tone is one which we recognize at once: we have heard it from the chairmen of a thousand meetings. The costume is the costume of the twelfth century but the voice is the voice of the twentieth century. The specious arguments are put forward one by one: 'We have been perfectly disinterested', Becket brought about his own death — 'suicide while of Unsound Mind'. At moments they sound unpleasantly plausible. The crux of the matter is the speech of the Second Knight. Mr Eliot sees the story of Becket as essentially a conflict between Church and State. Historically, that may be only one way of looking at it, but for us in the twentieth century it is the most significant aspect. Becket had been a great Chancellor, who had wielded supreme power in the State, subject only to the King. Henry wished him 'to unite the offices of Chancellor and Archbishop'. 'Had Becket concurred with the King's wishes', the Second Knight goes on, 'we should have had an almost ideal state: a union of spiritual and temporal administration, under the central government. I knew Becket well, in various official relations; and I may say that I have never known a man so well qualified for the highest rank of the Civil Service. And what happened? The moment that Becket, at the King's instance, had been made Archbishop, he resigned the office of Chancellor, he became

more priestly than the priests, he ostentatiously and offensively adopted an ascetic manner of life, he affirmed immediately that there was a higher order than that which our King, and he as the King's servant, had for so many years striven to establish; and that — God knows why — the two orders were incompatible.' The ironic voice goes on, pointing out that if we agree for a moment with these arguments we would have murdered Becket too. The worship of the State, the serving of Mammon rather than God, which is the twentieth century disease, is implicit in the Second Knight's conclusion: 'If you have now arrived at a just subordination of the pretensions of the Church to the welfare of the State, remember that it is we who took the first step. We have served your interests, we merit your applause, and, if there is any guilt whatever in the matter you must share it with us.' Can any twentieth century audience evade this issue? We must indeed share the guilt. With the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in our minds we must feel that our guilt is heavier still. The theme of *Murder in the Cathedral* is indeed contemporary. Henry attacked the Church by killing the body; it has been left for the State of our own day to develop the refinements by which it kills the soul.

This external conflict between Church and State, spiritual and temporal, Becket and his murderers, is the main theme of Part II. Part I is concerned with the more complex internal conflict in Becket himself, as he struggles with the temptations of worldly delights and worldly power and most of all with his own spiritual pride. It is resolved at the end of Part I when he recognizes and conquers the last and most deadly temptation. The structure of the play springs from this two-fold conflict. Thomas himself describes it to us:

Meanwhile the substance of our first act
Will be shadows, and the strife with shadows.
Heavier the interval than the consummation.
All things prepare the event. Watch.

The 'strife with shadows' is, of course, the struggle with the Tempters, with the unrecognized evil in himself. The Sermon, again based closely on history, provides the interval, and the murder is the climax of the external conflict. For Becket it becomes a consummation:

I have had a tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper,
And I would no longer be denied.

'All things prepare the event' — we are conscious from the beginning of impending doom, the Chorus constantly emphasizes it, the shaping hand of God is always present and so the play gains something of the relentless inevitability and the sweep of Greek drama. Moreover the structure is very closely knit by doubling the parts of the Knights with those of the Tempters. The external and internal conflicts are thus closely woven together and the speeches of the four Knights

after the murder recall the themes of the four Tempters. Nor is this an artificial connection, for Becket's early love of power, and certainly his pride, must have made him enemies. The two parts of the play are, then, concerned with two aspects of the same conflict, between the life of the world and the life given to God. The Sermon provides a breathing space, where tension is relaxed, but its theme is very much the same. Becket considers the paradox of the Christmas celebration — 'at this same time we celebrate at once the Birth of Our Lord and his Passion and Death upon the Cross. Beloved, as the World sees, this is to behave in a strange manner. For who in the World will both mourn and rejoice at once and for the same reason?' These themes of death and birth, martyrdom and its meaning, the peace of God and the peace of the World are the themes we find constantly recurring in the rest of the play. Here, in the moving and dignified prose of the Sermon they are expressed with greater clarity, but they are everywhere present in the First and Second Parts, sometimes in statement, sometimes in imagery. This constant repetition and interweaving of themes and the simpler statement of them in the Sermon is rather reminiscent of musical structure. The emotional associations of the recurring images, all taken up again and gathered into the harmony of the final chorus, is also very like music.

The imagery of *Murder in the Cathedral* is so rich in emotional associations and power of suggestion that it conveys the poet's meaning far more fully and intensely than any statement could. We have, for example, already noticed his preoccupation with the theme of renewal of life coming through death, which is at the heart of Christianity. To express this Mr Eliot sometimes uses the Christian symbolism of the Cross, blood, redemption; but his more frequently used and far more powerful image is much older than Christianity. It is the image of the Seasons, the death and renewal of the earth, which has been woven into the rhythms of man's life from primeval times. This association of primitive image and, relatively, modern content generates a very powerful emotion and stirs forces within us which are perhaps largely unconscious:

Since golden October declined into sombre November
And the apples were gathered and stored, and the land became
brown

sharp points of death in a waste of water and mud,
The New Year waits, breathes, waits, whispers in darkness.

The death of the year suggests the death of the martyr. The 'sharp points of death' anticipate Becket's words at the end of Part I —

Now my good Angel, whom God appoints
To be my guardian, hover over the swords' points.

The image is used again at a key-point — the opening chorus of Part II:

What sign of the spring of the year?
Only the death of the old: not a stir, not a shoot, not a breath,
What signs of a bitter spring?
The wind stored up in the East.

And war among men defiles the world, but death in the Lord
renews it.

And the world must be cleaned in the winter, or we shall have
only

A sour spring, a parched summer, an empty harvest.

Between Christmas and Easter what work shall be done?

The parallel between the cleaning of the earth, followed by the fruition of summer and harvest and the idea of redemption is made in the above lines with far more suggestive force than any statement can give. The image is used again in the lovely lines of the First Tempter, as he tries to persuade Thomas to trust in the renewed favour of the King:

Spring has come in winter. Snow in the branches
Shall float as sweet as blossoms. Ice along the ditches
Mirror the sunlight. Love in the orchard
Send the sap shooting.

These are only a few examples. The image recurs again and again throughout the play, like an undercurrent whose unseen power sways us more than we know.

Mr Eliot also uses Animal imagery a great deal. It is less explicit than the Season image but has a terrifying power. It seems to suggest the forces of evil let loose upon the world like beasts of prey and the terrible powers of cruelty and evil in man himself, when restraints are broken and the animal in him is set free. So the Chorus cries in unnamed fear to Thomas, whose spirit alone can save them from the evil that is coming and the evil in themselves:

The forms take shape in the dark air:
Puss-purr of leopard, footfall of padding bear,
Palm-pat of nodding ape, square hyaena waiting
For laughter, laughter, laughter. The Lords of Hell are here.

Later, just before the murder, the Chorus cries again:

I have heard
Laughter in the noises of beasts that make strange noises; jackal
jackass, jackdaw; the scurrying noise of mouse and jerboa;
the laugh of the loon, the lunatic bird. I have seen
Grey necks twisting, rat tails twining, in the thick light of dawn.

What is woven on the loom of fate
What is woven in the councils of princes
Is woven also in our brains, our veins,
Is woven like a pattern of living worms
In the guts of the women of Canterbury.

The murderers themselves.

come not as men come, but
Like maddened beasts. They come not like men, who
Respect the sanctuary, who kneel to the Body of Christ,
But like beasts. You would bar the door
Against the lion, the leopard, the wolf or the boar,
Why not more
Against beasts with the souls of damned men?

So the priest implores Thomas, just before the Knights enter, shouting

Come down Daniel to the lions' den,
Come down Daniel for the mark of the beast.

The metaphor of the wheel, which recurs several times, is a vivid way of conveying a rather difficult and abstract theme. The destiny of man revolves like the turning wheel, whose still centre is God. Though man may appear free to turn, God's is the controlling power, as every point on the circumference of a wheel is the same distance from the fixed centre:

That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action
And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still
Be forever still.

Mr Eliot uses the same image in *Four Quartets* — God is 'the still point of the turning world'.

Words suggesting cruel and brutal force, the image of rape itself, are often used. They help to convey the brutal cruelty of the murder of Becket and still more that it is something evil and unnatural, contrary to the purposes of God. The hearts of the Chorus are 'torn from them', they cry:

We know of oppression and torture,
We know of extortion and violence,
Our labour taken away from us,
Our sins made heavier upon us.
We have seen the young man mutilated,
The torn girl trembling by the mill-stream.

and later —

I have consented, Lord Archbishop, have consented,
 Am torn away, subdued, violated,
 United to the spiritual flesh of nature,
 Mastered by the animal powers of spirit,
 By the final ecstasy of waste and shame.

The word 'waste' recalls another recurring image, one which Mr Eliot has often used — the Waste Land. He has reminded us that

Human kind cannot bear very much reality.

The vision of God is the only true reality. Without it,

All things become less real, man passes
 From unreality to unreality,
 From grandeur to grandeur to final illusion.

It is not merely a reminiscence of Plato's world of shadows, unreal beside the eternal idea in Heaven nor the feeling — 'As a dream when one awaketh, so shalt thou despise their image.' The Chorus sees the Waste Land as something evil, the consequence of sin, the appalling futility of

Emptiness, absence, separation from God;
 The horror of the effortless journey, to the empty land
 Which is no land, only emptiness, absence, the Void,

After the murder the Chorus says: 'I wander in a land of barren boughs: if I break them, they bleed; I wander in a land of dry stones: if I touch them, they bleed.'

The Sea image seems to represent the restless forces of life, the meaningless flux which is hostile to the apprehension of the eternal, whose continual surging tries to drown the command: 'Be still, and know that I am God.' So the sea is 'bitter' and 'brings death'. When Becket returns the Second Priest cries:

We can lean on a rock, we can feel a firm foothold
 Against the perpetual wash of tides of balance of forces of
 barons and landholders.
 The rock of God is beneath our feet.
 Our lord, our Archbishop returns.

but later the priests are wiser:

O Thomas, my Lord, do not fight the intractable tide,
 Do not sail the irresistible wind; in the storm,
 Should we not wait for the sea to subside?

All these images are caught up again and woven into the pattern of the final Chorus, the Te Deum which closes the play.

'They affirm Thee in living; all things affirm Thee in living; the

beast on the earth, both the wolf and the lamb; the worm in the soil and the worm in the belly.' — So the beast image is resolved.

'Even in us the voices of seasons, the snuffle of winter, the song of spring, the drone of summer, the voices of beasts and of birds, praise Thee.' So the Season image is woven into the pattern. The following lines give us the symbols of Blood and redemption, death and new life, the sea and the waste land:

We thank Thee for Thy mercies of blood, for Thy redemption
by blood,

For the blood of Thy martyrs and saints
Shall enrich the earth, shall create the holy places.

For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has given his
blood for the blood of Christ,

There is holy ground . . .

From where the western seas gnaw at the coast of Iona,
To the death in the desert, the prayer in forgotten places by the
broken imperial column,

From such ground springs that which forever renews the earth
Though it is forever denied. Therefore, O God, we thank Thee
Who hast given such blessing to Canterbury.

The satisfaction we receive from this final pattern and resolution of the dominant images in the last chorus is surely akin to our perception of a similar process in music. It is, I think, difficult to overestimate the effect of the imagery upon our understanding of the play.

Murder in the Cathedral has certain striking affinities with older dramatic forms. We have seen that it recalls the Morality play in its simple and universal theme. The shadowy figures of the Tempters also recall the medieval use of allegory. Certain qualities in a man's soul become personified. The resemblance to Greek drama is even closer. The action of the play is confined to the last month of Becket's life. The rest is related by the Chorus or the Tempters. From the beginning we are given the feeling of relentless fate:

The doom on the house, the doom on the Archbishop, the doom
on the world.

We share Thomas's feeling that the murder is almost a relief:

All my life they have been coming, these feet. All my life
I have waited.
I give my life
To the Law of God above the Law of Man.

In Greek drama man is often the helpless plaything of blind fates,

which strike at him relentlessly. There is a similar feeling of inevitability in *Murder in the Cathedral* but here the tragedy has meaning — 'Destiny waits in the hand of God'. The function of the Chorus recalls Greek tragedy but Mr Eliot enlarges its scope. It is used to relate the past history of Thomas and to foretell the future. Moreover the emotion of the Chorus affects the audience very powerfully. The fear, horror, shame, contrition of the women of Canterbury is shared by the audience. They quicken our suspense and expectation and their lyrical, free verse is the chief instrument in the creation of atmosphere. They also help to clarify the theme, but, most important of all, they stand for all humanity and give the play much of its eternal significance. They speak largely in symbol and so greatly enlarge the scope and deepen the meaning of the play. They are 'the scrubbers and sweepers of Canterbury', but they are also Everyman:

The small folk who live among small things.

Finally, *Murder in the Cathedral* recalls the very origins of drama itself. As we listen to the familiar words from the church liturgy with which it ends, we remember that first Easter play, which was followed, too, by the Te Deum. The wheel has come full circle, the drama has returned to the Church. The white-robed priests, the sorrowing women, the grey walls of the cathedral — it might be the 'Quem quaeritis' again. As we watch, the centuries blend and blur.

With all this in mind, what is the final effect of the play? I should hesitate to call it tragic. Tragedy makes us conscious of waste in human life, above all it calls forth a surge of pity for the chief character. How bitterly our hearts echo Othello's cry: 'O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago', or share Lear's anguish: 'Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?' This is the tragic emotion. But Becket does not need our pity, he commands rather our reverence and admiration: 'Nothing is here for tears.' We do pity the Chorus, but then, we identify ourselves with them as they acknowledge their guilt and appeal to God for mercy. The one is the religious emotion: the other the tragic. In tragedy we feel bewildered sadness, in a religious play the purpose is made clear and the sorrow transfigured. The one calls forth our pity, in the other we implore the pity of God for ourselves. Is it more blessed to give or to receive? Shakespeare stirs us to an agony of compassion. The last Chorus of *Murder in the Cathedral* is in a different tradition. It appeals not to our humanity but to our religious experience, but, if we have really understood the play, we cannot fail to be deeply moved and, I think, to share the Chorus' final acknowledgment of sin and plea for forgiveness:

Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as type of the
common man,

Of the men and women who shut the door and sit by the fire;
Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the night of God,
the surrender required, the deprivation inflicted;
Who fear the injustice of men less than the justice of God;
Who fear the hand at the window, the fire in the thatch,
the fist in the tavern, the push into the canal,

Less than we fear the love of God.

We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our fault; we
acknowledge

That the blood of the martyrs and the agony of the saints
Is upon our heads.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Christ have mercy upon us,

Lord have mercy upon us.

Blessed Thomas, pray for us.

VILLAGE, TOWN AND SUBURB

TOM BURNS

THE gist of what this paper contains is very simply expressed. Two hundred years ago most people lived in the country. A hundred years ago they lived in towns. Today most of us, and it is a rapidly increasing majority, live in suburbs. All one can do in this space is to look at some of the more obvious implications of those three human situations, and of the migratory movements which have accomplished the changes between them. For, in essence, what we have to deal with are migrations — on a scale which had not occurred in this country for well over a thousand years and which affected the migrant and his descendants in many ways as deeply as those more distant translations to the new continents affected their contemporaries. There is a significant resemblance between the nostalgia of the American Irish for the old country, of the New Zealander for 'home', and the cult of the countryside in England. There is no need to expand on the extent and indestructibility of the mythology which has grown up around English country life. A good many intelligent publishers have grown prosperous on it, to say nothing of the speculative builder and the building society promoter. But with all of us, it pervades ordinary thinking habits in curious and unsuspected ways; it is for example impossible to doubt Mr Aneurin Bevan's sincerity when he said, introducing the 1946 Housing Bill, that it was the Government's intention in its housing policy 'to create some of the agreeable features of the villages of England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where people of different groups of income lived together almost in the same street', though it strikes one as rather odd and out of character. This particular pronouncement has been echoed so often that at times one has felt that a whole generation of architects, planners and town councillors have dedicated themselves to the creation of a sort of cloud-Cranford-land in the new towns and suburbs.

We appreciate, of course, that these rather vague Arcadies of the past contained a good many unpleasant features. We are not out to revive their enormous infant mortality, their monotonous diet, their diseases, their stinks, their ignorance and superstition. What we like so much about them is their 'social pattern', and we, with quite astonishing naïveté, feel that we ought to be able somehow to reproduce that social pattern while rejecting all the other things that, unhappily for our ancestors, they had to put up with at the same time. In this we are acting as though social relationships existed by

themselves, instead of being part and parcel of people's lives as they were and are in fact lived. Part of the purpose of this paper is to show how we have arrived at a position in which we think we can abstract and use for our own purposes a social pattern much as we can a technological process or an administrative system.

To an extent quite beyond our own experience, the lives of people two hundred years ago were 'of a piece', were, to make a useful pun, homocentric. Not that life was 'all of a piece' in the way that we are informed it is among primitive peoples. Among these it is apparently next to impossible to find any social, economic, political or religious act or process which is isolable as such from the rest of life. 'As regards the individual himself,' says C. T. W. Curle, 'his activity in these various single social fields is entirely determined by his position in all of them.' Village society in the eighteenth century would have fallen short of this in the extent of its inner cohesion and the interpenetration of its processes and structures. But it was a good deal nearer to that extreme than to our condition. Work was something which filled the daylight hours, but caught up and included a good deal more than work. In fact work and leisure were, for the ordinary tradesman, craftsman and cottager intermingled and almost indistinguishable. For the landworker, and equally the type of half peasant-half domestic manufacturer, half craftsman-half farmer, work was something that was carried on amidst and through his family life, his friendships, his important social occasions and the casual friendliness of every day; it was done in fields or on the common within sight of his home; or even in the home, in the kitchen along with the cooking, the baby-minding, the conversation, the stories, the scandal, the quarrels. The individual worked to his own rhythm, ordering his own day as he saw fit. Guy Chapman in *Culture and Survival* quotes a witness before one of the innumerable Royal Commissions of the early nineteenth century on the shortcomings of the shoemakers, one of the most long-lived groups of domestic industrialists: 'They (the shoemakers) begin in the morning when they like, but if any mortal thing happen, away they are from their stools and after it; and sometimes they will go and spend their time drinking with an acquaintance and to make up for it, they will work until eleven or twelve o'clock at night.'

Moreover, the results of work were tangible, of quite obvious utility and significance; the results of work were the harvest they gathered, the cattle they took to market, the clothes they wore, or the yarn and cloth they sold to the factor.

Village society itself was a far more complex structure. There were the leaders of the community, the squire and the parson, who also as often as not represented the law and local government. At the other end of the scale there were day-labourers, the poorest cottagers

who worked for the squire most of the time or found jobs road mending or herding. But they would at least have their cow or a pig or two, with the right to free grazing on the common. In between there was a complex but largely unstratified community, the families of tradesmen, craftsmen, professional men, of dealers and shopkeepers and specialists in husbandry and child care and nursing. The Hammonds have rightly stressed this complexity of village society and the freedom of movement up and down that characterized it. Highly differentiated as it was, almost every social process was worked out through the actual, face-to-face contact of the persons concerned. Secondary relationships, remote impersonal ties with people whom they did not know or see, were few and stable—Government, the Church—and hardly affected anyone outside the narrow group of literates.

Although what happened in the latter half of the eighteenth century was the climax of a process which had been initiated in the previous century (and research has produced evidence of a sort of pilot industrial revolution under the Tudors) for our purposes we can take our next date, 1850, as marking a full turn, or rather half-turn, of the wheel. The majority of the people of Great Britain were living in towns. The repeal of the Corn Laws had accelerated the final stages of the exodus from the countryside which enclosures, the new farming, the collapse of cottage-based industries, starvation wages and eventually the New Poor Law had begun and kept moving. Engels had written his classic description of the condition of the working classes. Population had increased almost threefold, in England alone from something like $6\frac{1}{2}$ million in 1750 to 18 million in 1850; this increase had been accompanied by a movement of population which had drained the countryside and swollen the new towns still more. By 1851 the number of agricultural labourers and shepherds amounted to just over one million, a small fraction of the employed population. But Leeds and Birmingham had doubled in size in thirty years, Manchester had over four times the population in 1831 she had had in 1774. Industry and mass migration had formulated that pattern of population distribution which is now familiar, with the main conurbations already plainly discernible.

We know what those towns were like. Most of us would find in this statement in the Hammonds's *Town Labourer* an irrefutably accurate expression of the judgment of history of the new industrial cities of England: 'Perhaps the best way to describe the new towns and their form of government would be to say that so far from breaking or checking the power of circumstances over men's lives, they symbolized the absolute dependence and helplessness of the mass of the people living in them. They were not so much towns as barracks; not the refuge of a civilization but the barracks of an

industry. This character was stamped on their form and life and government. The medieval town had reflected the minds of centuries and the subtle associations of a living society with a history; these towns reflected the violent enterprise of an hour, the single passion that had thrown street on street in a frantic monotony of disorder. Nobody could read in these shapeless improvisations what Ruskin called "the manly language of a people inspired by resolute and common purpose". It would be as reasonable to examine the form and structure of an Italian ergastulum in order to learn the wishes and character of the slaves who worked in it.'

In this new environment, the close interplay of the individual and the physical and social orders which surrounded him had gone. Work was now something which took husband, wife and child to factories, often different factories, where for twelve or ten hours every day they were locked in, and subjected by their need and rigorous discipline to a routine of labour geared to power-driven machines. Female and child labour was of course nothing new. The women had always helped in the fields and had often been the principal domestic industrial worker; the child had always served as the fifth wheel, the holder, the fetcher and carrier. But they had worked normally together, in the family. Now segregation was inevitable. Children were at a premium, especially in the textile mills, but also in every industry where factory conditions demanded easily disciplined and easily trained labour without the physical strength and traditional skills that belonged to men.

Work in the new towns broke the family into individual factory workers for most of their waking hours. It took them out of sight and out of mind of the home. It showed its reward not in eatable, useable, saleable products but in a wage-pocket. The role of the breadwinner, and the leadership role of the father in the family lost immensely in reality and significance. A similar reduction in significance took place in the working half of his life. The new order had not only divorced ownership and work: it separated out the single strand of the employer-employee relationship from the complex of social intercourse which had involved work in the whole structure of earlier village society. An employer and an operative were thought of as behaving towards each other — and ended by believing themselves to act towards each other — according to characteristic modes of behaviour motivated by appropriate economic drives. The gains registered by each side were economic, the pressures exerted were economic, the incentives proffered were economic.

The sector of existence in which such economic relationships excluded all thought of others had become also the dominant aspect of life for the town-dweller. It was in this sector that we see first controlling the particular sort of mental approach which now lies

behind much of our habitual responses to social problems and conflicts. It is a mental approach by which we tend to think of roles in society as determined by abstract relationship patterns which have a larger reality than the individual role each of us assumes. Economic man ousted man from a wide field of public and private discussion and social intercourse. And that ousting goes on, over a wider field if in a less crude form: economic man has now, apparently, undergone further fission into man as producer and man as consumer, and democratic processes assume a more vivid, meaningful character for us if we think of them as consumer representation or industrial consultation.

Looked at in another way, this new view of human relations was forced on people by the sheer size of the social environment in which they now found themselves. Personal relationships such as existed in the village, personal identity itself, were dwarfed out of significance; there seemed no other course than to treat relationships, and accept them, as a sort of algebra, with x or y valid whatever sort of persons they stood for.

As the factories grew, and more old trades and new processes were transformed into repetitive movements of machines, so the residential quarters spread. As the industrial, commercial and residential areas grew, a geographical significance was given to the breakdown of personal existence and social relationships into isolated sectors. As the towns themselves grew, so the separation of the mass of workpeople and their families from their native countryside became more pronounced, more nearly absolute.

Changes in the physical, cultural and social environment of the individual on the scale and at the pace of those now taking place were far beyond his capacity to assimilate. Unfortunately, with history even as recent as that of the Industrial Revolution still the creation of the literate minority which was also the dominant class, it is impossible to re-create for ourselves the confusion and helplessness that must have filled the lives of the lower orders of society during the transitional period. Some of the secondary effects we know: the surrender of religious observance, which went along with the rest of a split and derelict culture; the compensations, escapes and revenges provided by drunkenness and vice. One aspect of the loss of significance in society was the new sources of prestige and power which were tapped in the family and the nation. In the family, as Eric Fromm has pointed out, the industrial townsman could feel he was somebody. 'He was obeyed by wife and children, he was the centre of the stage, and he accepted the role as his natural right. He might be a nobody in his social relations, but he was a king at home.' In place of the breadwinner and leader of the family group was the domestic tyrant; here again, our awareness of the social situation of

the individual in Victorian times has been formulated by middle-class records. But the middle-class Victorian parent was a pale shadow of the 'old man', the savage who ruled most slum homes.

In the last hundred years the crudities of the urban situation have been greatly reduced. The social conscience has been at work, with street lighting and the police force in the front line. There was also an emotional revulsion against the sheer physical ugliness of the new environment and against the vast disproportion between the individual and the social processes in which he was caught. The first display of this reaction was direct, simple and quite hopeless, but in view of what happened with later manifestations, some interest attaches to it. During the 'eighties, a group of disciples of Morris planned and built a small London suburb which was to house a community of the right-minded; Bedford Park, a little battered, still exists, and preserves something of an air amongst the wastes of West London. For William Morris, industry and the machine were the root of all evil, and the only hope for humanity was to revive the personal relationship between the craftsman and the artifact which had obtained in the old days. The beginning of the counter-revolution was to take place at Turnham Green. Of course, the hope came to less than nothing, but later attempts to humanize the new environment were rooted in the same feeling of loss, in the same nostalgic revivalism; only they put back less essential, less powerfully driven clocks.

The towns continued to grow. Towards the end of the century it became apparent that one function of their growth was the creation of the massive slum. Slums there had always been, but the word itself, in its origins, connotes smallness — a 'dirty back street or court or alley' is still the definition to be found in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. But by 1900 the slums had swelled terrifyingly. The poor, who had been for a thousand years the neighbours as well as the servants of the rich became the inhabitants of a foreign territory which the hardy traveller penetrated with all the excitement, terror and fantasy of a missionary in darkest Africa. In London, 'east of Aldgate Pump' was a phrase implicit with the vague apprehension of miles of fierce and monstrous squalor stretching through Shore-ditch, Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Stepney, Shadwell, Hackney, Poplar. At the turn of the century the mass slum dominated the cities of Britain. But the dominion was curiously mute, because the size of the growing slums increased their isolation. When novelists, from George Moore to Wells, dredged up representative specimens of the lower classes, they never penetrated below the level of the servant girl, who came from the country or from the evangelized orphanages and were separated from the slums by unbridgeable gulfs. And the isolation has persisted, outlasting reforms, conscript armies, mass

transferences of population. What was really shocking about *Our Towns* was not so much the state of affairs among evacuees which was revealed by the survey, but the blank ignorance of all other sections of society about it.

The segregation of the slums has become a well-established feature of our social structure, and the principle of segregation persists even when the physical slum is demolished. During the 'twenties and 'thirties hundreds of thousands of slum-dwellers were moved into new dwellings in new housing estates. This move meant that the physical environment of the slum-dweller was improved a good deal — though not immoderately so; but very little else was affected. Our attitude to slum clearance has been almost a matter of medical hygiene — and our methods a matter of veterinary treatment. At all events, the outcome was that the new housing estates were socially more isolated, more uniform in character, than the slums.

The mass grouping and segregation of poverty is only the outstanding example of a tendency which has affected all the other constituent elements of towns. Industry has coalesced, tending to take over whole quarters, ousting other forms of development. Commercial centres have concentrated in the same way. And we have now reached the stage at which we regard this separating out of urban function as right and desirable. A town, after all, is a contrivance for implementing and facilitating social relationships and functions of all kinds; what we seem to want now are towns in which the different relationships and functions are formed and carried out in different parts set aside and adapted for those single uses. Zoning is designed to complete and perpetuate the process of abstraction and standardization which we noted before; the towns of the future are to be divided into areas where people — the social orders in their several densities — will sleep, eat, propagate and rear families, where they will mind machines or ledgers, where they will shop, indulge their social proclivities and so on. This is not by any means the product of mechanistic or bureaucratic minded planners; when we strip from planning the elaborate mythology built around it by coloured maps and architects' perspectives, what we have left is a universal human desire to get ourselves oriented in the monstrous cities we have built.

One other purpose of planning is of course to recall some of the functions, some of the constituent features of the social contrivance of the town which have already deserted it or been expelled. Social intercourse of any kind between the families of the well-to-do and the families of the poor is now impossible because the rich have left the city. The cleavage between employer and operatives which was apparent in the nineteenth century when the substantial houses of the owners stood only a few minutes walk from the street where their

hands lived, has become an estrangement. The managers have followed the employers, and the professional classes the managers; in most English industrial towns, social status is quite easily measurable by the distance between home and workplace, at any rate in the middle classes.

We have been so indignant about the wretched mess this exodus has made of the countryside that we have tended to forget what has been left behind. One fully matured, but still not unrepresentative, specimen is the Black Country, a stretch of 150 square miles which a century of mining, quarrying, and industry has reduced to an obscene disfigurement of the English Midlands. There are over 9000 acres of old pitmounds, spoilbanks, subsidence areas and disused quarries, derelict land which now forms the principal feature of the landscape. One million people live in this area, and while there is no statistical evidence as yet, there is no doubt that the whole of the core of the Black Country is populated almost exclusively by working-class families. It is almost universal practice for managerial staffs of the factories in the area to live in the new suburbs a dozen miles to the east, south and west. Some of the larger concerns make a move away from the one-class neighbourhoods from which they recruit labour a condition of promotion. Doctors, teachers, local authority councillors and officials live outside, in the open, perhaps half-a-dozen towns away from the place they work in. The socially deserted ruck which remains is slowly decanted from ruinous slums into its new homes a few hundred yards away.

But it is the positive side of this twentieth-century process of suburbanization — of what the Americans call the exploding city — that really claims our attention. For present tendencies are clearly towards a thoroughgoing suburbanization of the whole town; not only are housing estates, industrial estates and neighbourhood centres to be added to the periphery of the town, but the older interior is also to undergo a process of suburbanization in time; as overspill industry and population are syphoned out of the central areas, so they too will be able to acquire the characteristic shape, internal structure and social atmosphere of the suburbs.

What is the character of the suburban environment? It is of fairly recent historical origin. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a group of humanitarian reformers like George Cadbury and Ebenezer Howard with influential connections inside politics, saw the problem of social reform as one which depended largely on the possibility of revising the urban environment. They saw the vital factor which accounted for the depression of human, social and moral values in the towns as something which had been present in the lives of the majority of the population before the growth of the towns had shut it out. This something was the physical presence of

nature itself. A whole century of the half-mystical cult of landscape supplied the fervour of conviction. What was wanted was the reunion of the family home with the flowering and fruitful land. Industrialists themselves, this group of reformers accepted industrialism as Morris and his group did not. People would still have to work in factories. But there was a way back, the nostalgia could be satisfied, the loss made good. The machine age itself was now providing the solution in the new leisure which it was giving the worker. The factory worker could become a part time agriculturalist; he could be given land around his own home in which he could grow vegetables for his family table, in which he could contribute colour and natural beauty to his immediate surroundings, in which his children could play among grass, trees and flowers. The Garden City movement was founded on the argument that the fresh food, the natural beauty, the exercise and contact with the living soil that gardens could provide would make for healthier and better people. Bournville, the first venture which was open to the general public, was started in 1895; each house had a garden of up to 800 square yards and there was plenty of ground available — and used — as allotments.

Bournville, as we know, was imitated in many places in this country and abroad, although most of the imitations took the form of closed industrial housing estates. But its real success was in proving that low density housing was not a reckless extravagance; the experiment paid its way. It was not only able to set, therefore, the standards for housing reform just at the time the State was to take up responsibility for housing, it also demonstrated to the private builder that this was what people wanted and that he could go on building low cost houses at a much lower density. In a decade, the typical town dwelling switched from the terraced villa to the semi-detached house with garden.

We feel the millions of bright little gardens which make up the greater part of urban Britain as much part of our traditional way of life, as we like to call it now, as beefeaters and afternoon tea. In fact, the tradition of home gardening is no more than two generations old. This minor social revolution, which has engineered the much more important revolution of the suburban environment, occurred because the housing reformers were right. It did restore some degree of reality to the parental role of provider of home and food, there were deep satisfactions for the ordinary Englishmen in cultivating land and making it grow, it did allow a much-needed immediacy of contact and interaction between man and his environment.

These gains were made at very considerable cost, however. Open development accelerated the growth of towns far beyond even the

rate which increasing population and intensified industrialization have enforced. The geographical separation between the city's functions in their distinct zones has grown so much as to become an absolute barrier for some social activities. And the new housing estates and suburbs — the Dagenhams and Kingstandings, the Surbitons and Solihulls — have themselves become symbols of monotony and of a sterile existence.

Why has that happened? Why did not the reversion to the countryside, the attempt to re-create something of the agreeable features of life in the villages of eighteenth-century England — which after all the earlier housing reformers were trying to do just as much as the Minister of Health — why did not it result in some healthier and more satisfying social structure? It is easy to answer that it was because all those social services and amenities which we are now going to put into neighbourhoods were left out of all the municipal estates and suburbs built before 1939. This is not by any means true, and if it were, why were those things left out? why were they regarded as inessential?

The answer that suggests itself is that the movement into low density suburbs or into the country was not derived so much from the positive attraction of the countryside as from the desire to escape from the town. And the escape was made not into eighteenth-century villages or into communities of any sort, old or new, but into the home, into a separate, free-standing family refuge, with as much distance and cover as possible between it and the next homes. And inside them, the anxieties and tensions which the urban environment has created and which their new-won seclusion fosters among the members of the family, will shut them still more securely from concern with the outside world. And if one wants to retreat from participation in even this ultimate social group — there is always the wireless to listen to, or the paper to read, or homework to be done, or the garden to dig.

RICHARDSON AND FIELDING

FRANK KERMODE

1

WITH the aid of Blanchard's unusually elaborate allusion-book,¹ it is possible to study in detail the posthumous antagonisms of Richardson and Fielding; nor is this an idle study, for the interaction of these graphs is by no means irrelevant to the course of the English novel.

Richardson, with the somewhat disloyal aid of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, was himself responsible for the tone of the first phase of Fielding's reputation, and for the stigma of lowness which did not fade from the name of the rival novelist until comparatively recently. Richardson's admirers, lady novelists, moralists, journalists, all reiterated his charges with varying degrees of animosity. At the same time, the indisputable fact that Fielding was very enjoyable, ensured that he was widely read; and certain features of his composition further ensured that he acquired a reputation at least for skilful presentation, and for a new conception of the novel plot. His relationship, self-advertised, to epic models, must have appealed to a basic neo-classicism in the reading public, which sometimes did, and sometimes did not, properly evaluate Fielding's dependence on the mock-heroic. Richardson saw through the device and suggested that Fielding's models were not Homer and Virgil but Cotton; and of course this is essentially true, though Richardson certainly undervalued, as one would expect, the well-established ironical possibilities of this form, and scarcely saw that Fielding was in fact reversing the mock-heroic policy of deflation.² To less prejudiced commentators it must have been his structural virtues which were the most immediately engaging qualities of Fielding. One could perhaps summarize the contemporary attitude by saying that a willing or unwilling admission of the technical interest and virtuosity of Fielding's work was accompanied by a righteous or a guilty sense that its neo-classic virtues did not extend into the moral sphere; unlike his rival, he did not 'teach the passions to move at the command of virtue'. His novels were unfortunately, in Dr Burney's phrase, 'male amusements' — Homeric smoking-room stories. This attitude hardened with the publication of Arthur Murphy's 'villainous sketch' which

¹ *Fielding the Novelist* (New York, 1926).

² Mr Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral* has made the present generation particularly sensitive to the implications of this narrative device. I owe my reference to Fielding's reversal of the *Virgil Travestied* tradition to a lecture delivered in 1938 by Professor A. R. Humphreys.

authorized the already common practice of identifying the allegedly low moral tone of the novels with a looseness in the life of their author. The not unfamiliar historical process was already making it difficult for anyone to appraise, in a disinterested way, the actual work of Fielding. What is more, this attitude almost inevitably predicated a contrast with Richardson, in whom moral sufficiency was perhaps regarded as implying a parallel deficiency in neo-classic style. This latter failing did not, of course, militate against Richardson's public reputation since it was socially so much more respectable than Fielding's corresponding defect.

But by the greatest of all Richardsonians, Dr Johnson, the superiority of the older author is defended as equally evident in matters of technique as in matters of morality. Johnson refused to admit the facile distinction which made Fielding an observer and chronicler and Richardson a moralist. He willingly gave his authority to the view that Fielding was superficial — 'Harry Fielding knew nothing but the shell of life' — but far from compensating Fielding with the credit of superior technical assurance, he held that Richardson was 'as superior to him in talents as in virtue'. And the age of Johnson, if called upon to testify, would agree.

How far would this be honest? There is an English custom of naturalizing the desirable but plainly immoral by secreting it in the very act of condemning it. So Machiavelli is absorbed into practical politics and converted into a nursery monster for public show. The myth of Fielding's dissolute life, so painstakingly demolished by Austin Dobson and Cross, is a similar smokescreen. Meanwhile, by way of compensating Fielding for the injustice, the English embarked upon a not entirely defensible plan of extravagantly applauding the purely technical virtues of his narrative. In consequence, this was the only aspect of Fielding which was thoroughly explored before English scholarship became the intensive occupation it now is, and all the obvious points about Fielding's skill and his own theory of the novel were made long ago. We may give a new twist to Samuel Rogers's admiration for the scene in Molly Seagrim's bedroom, but we are still working in the old compensatory tradition. Long before Coleridge, there is a steady stream of comment eulogizing the brilliance of the plotting of *Tom Jones*. 'The final catastrophe is kept so long and so well concealed, and yet is so natural and unforced.' And Byron's reaction sums up the traditional attitude; he professed a keen admiration for Fielding and called him 'the *prose* Homer of nature', but nevertheless appealed to the public not to condemn *him* as a blackguard so long as they continued to condone Fielding.

Meanwhile, Richardson's reputation continued in the same key, whether or no he was as widely read as formerly. It was not unusual to compare him with Shakespeare — 'None', says a writer of 1805,

'except Shakespeare has displayed such a knowledge of the human mind.' The emphasis of criticism remains on the moral quality and not upon the technique. Johnson had failed to make his point. The two novelists stood in relation to each other very much as they had done in their lifetime.

The alteration in their stance was accomplished by Coleridge. Coleridge began as a Richardsonian, but in the process of time his attitude changed until he was ready to do Fielding the service that Johnson had done Richardson. He crystallized, once and for all, the legend of the supremacy of the plot of *Tom Jones*, granting it equality, in a famous passage, with those of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *The Alchemist*. But he went further. First he developed criticisms of Richardson which had germinated in *Shamela*, but which had been partly stifled by *Clarissa*. He called his former hero 'morbid', spoke of 'the self-involution' and the 'loaded sensibility' of his books, and contrasted the sunshine of Fielding with 'the close, hot, day-dreamy continuity of Richardson'. He went so far as boldly to dispute the superiority of Richardson's morals, alleging that *Clarissa* was in fact poisonous to the mind. Blanchard calls this 'the boldest stroke of all'. In a critique of great subtlety he indicates and approves Fielding's dissociation of conduct and character, and appeals to the young man to consult 'his heart and conscience only, without adverting to what the world would say', and admit that he feels the better for reading *Tom Jones*, which was apparently a bold confession. Although Coleridge did Fielding a further service in asserting the intellectual quality of *Jonathan Wild*, it is this championship of his morality which upsets the equilibrium of reputation in Fielding's favour. Thackeray could express the older view; but the ultimate exposure of the biographical slanders established Coleridge's estimate so firmly that it passes current at the present time. Yet it may be found that in his famous remarks on the dissociation of conduct and character, Coleridge was sowing the seeds of a newer and fairer estimate; for here he perceives the basic dualism in Fielding.

Nevertheless, Coleridge won the day for Fielding by asserting his moral superiority in a contest where his technical superiority had already been conceded. Hence the modern disequilibrium. It is gratifying, indeed, that the last few years have produced some criticism of the novel which, though it seems to shirk Richardson, clearly indicates that a revaluation is in train. What is required is an affirmation of the validity of Richardson's conception of the novel form, and an investigation of this easy-going dichotomy of formal and moral value. One way of doing this is to compare the actual performances of the two novelists in matters of both texture and structure.

The reputation of Richardson had been able to withstand the counter-argument of Fielding's technical superiority for two reasons. First because this argument is not valid unless the sense of the word 'moral' is severely restricted to make it an antithesis of 'technical'; and secondly, because this argument, first used in defence of reading Fielding, seems to have been based on the assumption that the neo-classicism of Fielding's manner was in itself a virtue. We have seen how this position was altered when Richardson's reputation lost its moral advantage. We may now examine the status of Fielding as a moralist; and this involves, since the old dichotomy must be rejected, considerations of formal and technical value.

Coleridge well understood, what to Fielding himself was obvious, that Fielding is acceptable only as the moralist of the Good Heart; and his apologists are equally obliged to accept this fact, whether or not the Good Heart seems, to unbiased criticism, an adequate criterion for moral judgment within art forms.

There is nothing intellectualist about the moral criteria of the Good Heart. They come, in the long run, to common sense, which in this context is a supposedly instinctive understanding on the part of both reader and writer of Right and Wrong. Fielding was perfectly well aware that, given the validity of his method, he had to demand of the reader an identity of interest and point of view with his own. 'The author must have a good heart and feel what he expects his reader to feel' (*Tom Jones*, VI, 1). Thus Fielding explicitly requires his reader to possess the Good Heart. One would therefore not expect to find in Fielding, at any rate in the normal course, any critical examination or reasoned extension of the moral criteria, though it is true that in *Amelia* he is concerned with the direct examination of the practical menace involved by certain contemporary moral and psychological beliefs. But in *Amelia*, the effect is to emphasize all the more heavily the purely common sense and unphilosophical nature of the normal Good Heart, and further to establish that dissociation of character and conduct which Coleridge so acutely remarked and applauded in *Tom Jones*.

It seemed to Coleridge admirable that we are given a highly favourable view of Jones's character in despite of his revealed conduct; and he rightly suggested that Fielding stressed this dissociation when he made Blifil perform, when he released Sophia's bird, a commendable act for despicable motives. What seems less certain is that this species of observation is not mere grist to Johnson's mill. The unfortunate differences between Jones's suggested character and his recorded acts had the support of common observation. Jones himself is a rather less naturalistic Random, a Pickle without the low cunning — he is a picture of the common young man which Smollett might have thought de-natured, and on which he perhaps comments

obliquely in *Humphrey Clinker*; an idealized variant on a recognizable type. He represents a hot-blooded version of Allworthy; he stands for what was to Fielding a desirable vital compromise between excellent principles and the plenary and immediate operation of natural instinct.¹ In so far as the incest theme is not a merely theatrical peripeteia, it must stand as the crisis of this alliance of incompatibles. In this instance, the uninhibited demonstration of sexual prowess does not ultimately escape with a reproof from an understanding lover, a muff on a bed; it is suddenly confronted with the awful judgment of principle exalted into taboo. This is, one might think, the contrivance (for none of Fielding's incidents ever seem completely *uncontrived*) of a devoted moralist. He has produced a situation which, as the whole European tradition instructs us, is tragic. Fletcher evaded the issue, expressed in a much less poignant form in *A King and no King*, in a manner perhaps permissible to tragi-comedy, but nevertheless offensive to most of his critics. Fielding's situation can only be resolved comically by an unethical stroke of good luck; and this is what Fielding, not without a parade of 'technical' dexterity, offers. Now the flesh and the spirit of Jones are matters of common observation; but his good luck is not. Fielding the moralist completely evades the only genuinely crucial test that confronts his hero as a moral being, in the whole course of his adventures. The Comic Spirit has intervened, as usual theatrically, to solve what is essentially a theatrically over-simple dualism of character.

The interaction of character and principle in Richardson's *Love-lace* is precisely *not* of this kind. He is the product of an *uncommon* observation which penetrates to the level of archetypal integration of character and motive. There is no paradox in his respect for the principles he violates, so he is not merely a 'round' character but a moral being, with the vitality of a myth and the validity of a proverb tested on the pulses. A myth succeeds when it not only offers a total equivalent for the facts it explains, but possesses a suggestiveness transcending and sometimes even obscuring those facts. If this is true, Richardson's manner may be described as mythopoeic. He has only one plot; his true heroine is pent, never like Amoret to be rescued, in her ogre-guarded tower. The aspect of Richardson's

¹ It is remarkable that the 'natural instinct' displayed in Jones's aberrations is almost invariably the sexual instinct. The only possible explanation of this (and it is an explanation which further impugns the cause of the incest situation) is that Fielding was accepting in the spirit of Booth, and indeed of Peregrine Pickle, a behaviour-convention which exculpates the free exercise of this instinct as less immoral than, say, the theft of bread, on the grounds that the latter is not primarily instinctive, or than 'perjury, oppression, subornation, fraud, pandarism and the like infirmities' on the grounds that these are less commonly associated with the heyday of the blood.

novel technique which may legitimately be called Shakespearian, is his refusal to allow the primitive nature of this simple situation to be obscured, and his willingness to let it talk and talk and talk for itself. The Fieldingesque assumption of identity in the point of view is irrelevant to Richardson's method; he may himself have irrelevantly made the assumption, but it is not a precondition of his method as it is of Fielding's. By his almost fortuitous adoption of the narrative technique of 'epistolary correspondencies', Richardson solved in advance (though at a cost subsequent novelists were not, on the whole, prepared to pay), the great novelistic problem, so seriously pondered by Conrad and James, of the author's necessity to withdraw from his fiction. This withdrawal does not mean that the novelist who adopts the essentially tragic presentation of Richardson, or something corresponding to it, in preference to the essentially comic (Meredithian) presentation of Fielding, cannot suggest a personal norm as relevant. Indeed, it is the complexity of such suggestions which constitutes the advantage to be gained from the rejection of Fielding's point of view, with its manifest privileges of puppetry. The complexity of Fielding inheres in his texture — it is a matter of verbal suggestiveness; but of Richardson in his structure — a matter of the suggestiveness of *event*, and this last quality is essential to the major form as we now understand it. The plot of *Tom Jones* is notoriously rich and complicated, the plot of *Clarissa* notoriously straightforward. Yet the complexity of *Tom Jones* has the relatively superficial interest of the *pièce bien faite*, the entertainment value of rapid and interrelated incident of a more or less sensational kind. *Clarissa* is complex by reason of the infinity of moral overtones which radiate from the central choice and dishonouring. This genuine complexity has left its mark on the novel, especially on the self-conscious modern novel; for when a serious modern novelist feels himself to be closer to Fielding than to Richardson — for example, James Joyce and E. M. Forster — he must always (unless he is a very doctrinaire experimenter or a mere exponent of *reportage*) impose on events a pattern the significance of which is not to be appraised in terms of *theatrical* chronology or synchronization of event, but in terms which exist outside the plot; in music (*A Passage to India*, *Howards End*), or in literature (*Ulysses*), or in theology (*The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*).

It is amusing to note that Richardson was clearly aware, not only of the inevitable fate of *Clarissa*, but also of the point at which his merely technical responsibility for the course of events, ended. He knew that the moral responsibility was inescapably his; but he took advantage of his absolute detachment from his creation to walk round, as it were, the novel, inspecting in footnotes its moral implications and its narrative propriety. What is more, the story,

leading its own life, can surprise us, as that of a comedian never can, with moments of the most exquisite and felicitous surprise. Fielding has been much praised for the surprises offered by his narrative; but those of Richardson do not depend on a contrived theatrical anagnorisis — they are organic, and therefore the more acutely satisfying.

'You, Jack, may marry, continued he; and I have a wife in my eye for you. — Only thou'rt such an aukward mortal.' (He saw me affected, and thought to make me smile). 'But we don't make ourselves, except it be worse, by our dress. Thou art in mourning now, as well as I: But if ever thy ridiculous turn lead thee again to be Beau-Brocade, I will *bedizen* thee, as the girls say, on my return, to my own fancy, and according to thy own *natural appearance* — Thou shalt doctor my soul, and I will doctor thy body: Thou shalt see what a clever fellow I will make of thee.

'As for me, I never *will*, I never *can*, marry — That I will not take a few liberties, and that I will not try to start some of my former game, I won't promise — Habits are not easily shaken off — But they shall be by way of weaning. So *return* and *reform* shall go together. And now, thou sorrowful monkey, what aileth thee?' 'I do love him, my Lord.' (*Clarissa Harlowe*, vol. VIII, Let. 48.)

Richardson himself may have experienced a delighted surprise as he wrote the last sentence of this passage.

In spite of Richardson's heavily advertised moralism (it cannot be forgotten that in a sense *Clarissa* itself grew from the *Familiar Letters*), it is quite impossible to find, in either plot or character, that duality which we have examined in Jones and which is inseparable from Fielding's method and point of view. Even the vignettes, which might justly be called parables, at which Fielding excels, like the distraction of Parson Adams at the reported death of his son or the behaviour of the stage-coach passengers when Joseph Andrews is sighted naked in the ditch, have the restricted, though unexceptionable, import of the simplest kind of allegory. They are beautifully contrived, but any major alteration in the position of the Good Heart, any deflection of its steady view brought about by some overriding doctrinal force, and they at once lose some of their value. It is irrelevant that such deviations would themselves be the legitimate objects of the Good Heart's irony; that was why Richardson himself suffered. And yet he is quite independent of such rigid stances.

All readers of Fielding must be willing to acknowledge that his stories are, in fact, fabrications of incident made suggestive in the same way as the episodes above alluded to, and skilfully endowed

with a dramatic causation. As a plot, *Amelia* goes furthest in the direction of large-scale parabolic unity; and this structural development is achieved at the cost of an almost fatal reduction in vitality of texture. Of the other novels, it may be mentioned, as relevant in this connection, that much of the episode is not merely fabricated but in a sense prefabricated, for there is much genre- and type-characterization. The basis of these much-praised pictures of the Georgian social scene includes many and various ready-made literary patterns; this is a neo-classic habit of stylization learned in the theatre. Some modern criticism has called this 'formal realism' an eighteenth-century virtue; but it nevertheless clearly indicates the double-minded approach of mock-heroic rather than any method likely to produce a simple and morally significant fable.

It is true that Fielding was well aware of this, and asserted his right to lay down the laws of his own chosen form. With Scott's *dictum* that *Tom Jones* was 'nature itself', he would only have agreed after much definition of 'nature', for he was peculiarly aware of the character of the formal stylization he was using and of the advantages accruing from it — the inherited rigidity of his patterns are paradigms upon which the flux of his narrative may play, just as the mock-heroic point of view allows free movement in (and suggests) the verisimilitude of his incident. In all such matters of structure, it pays him to behave with perfect frankness. He clearly suggests, by the straightforward irony of Thwackum and Square, and in dozens of other places, the proper point of vantage at which Nature makes its impact upon the Good Heart; and there is only one such. If you look from any other angle, you will see not a new picture, as you do in the toy perspective-glass of *Pamela*, but a false version of this one. As the textural vitality of Fielding's writing diminishes — in *Amelia* — it develops from falsity to meaninglessness. Fielding's most celebrated contribution to the novel form, though it offers an expansion of scope (a gift inherited from Continental models), involves a contraction of structural vitality. You cannot walk round *Tom Jones*, as Richardson did round *Clarissa*.

It was a sound instinct that led the older critics to associate Richardson with Shakespeare; both these writers had the great gift of being aware of the unfathomable significance of simple and time-honoured story. Fielding perhaps may, with equal justice, be associated with Jonson. These two writers have the neo-classic virtue of plot and accurate documentation; they have, in no necessarily derogatory sense, the surface vitality that goes with a convinced though limited moralistic handling of incident (though of course Fielding lacked Jonson's unique sensitivity to all forms of social decay); their attitude to their creations is inevitably ironic.

Fielding's dualistic structure and dualistic treatment of character

are naturally reflected in the texture of his language — his irony. This celebrated quality has been admirably treated by Professor Humphreys. Suffice it to say that technically the effects are achieved by a burlesque formalism, and that the moral overtones are such as proceed from notes which have a place in the harmony of the Good Heart. It is scarcely surprising that when Professor Humphreys compares Fielding's irony with that of Swift, he has to conclude that Fielding's lacks philosophic and verbal complexity. Once more the Good Heart is not enough. The comic method it predictates certainly has local energy, but even in this limited field the later novelist lacks the true *energeia* of Swift and the radical implications of his irony. Just as Robinson Crusoe's mild discomfort when he wears conventional clothes again is a measure of Defoe's stature when we put it beside Gulliver's unspeakable understated disgust, so is the simple and superficial polarity of Fielding's irony, even at its most brilliant, a measure of his stature when it is considered beside the immeasurable implications of Swift's. For here we must contradict Coleridge, who preferred *Jonathan Wild* to anything in Swift. Ultimately the irony which gives Fielding his brilliance of texture is bounded by the same limitations as his structure — the fixed point of view granted alone to the Good Heart, which involves an unconsidered imposition on narrative of variables dressed as immutable criteria.

Given Fielding's 'point of view', you cannot let events 'talk' — you are too busy plotting them, they are too *bien faite*, they forfeit morality to Sardoodledom. Or if you leave them unplotted and merely recorded, you have to risk the fact that their unadorned significance may be less to the reader than to you — or even something quite different. And so you must assert your own standards. If these are the standards and yours is the sensibility of *l'homme moyen sensuel*, then your irony will flicker, however brilliant, against the dreary backdrop of the decent chap — in Fielding's case, against a genuinely good-humoured, high-spirited, humane, orthodox gentleman of the eighteenth century. And no matter how delightful that may be, one questions whether the *value* of the product — and by this is meant not its historical value or its readability but its essential moral value — is equivalent to that of a less accomplished, less urbane, less sociable, less witty writer, Richardson, who chose not to be God's spy, but rather to draw his breath in pain and tell the story.

BOOK REVIEWS

LEON RADZINOWICZ: *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750, Volume I: The Movement for Reform, with a Foreword by the Right Hon. Lord Macmillan, published under the auspices of the Pilgrim Trust. Stevens, 70s. net.*

This massive and learned volume will be indispensable to social historians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for it is no mere lawyers' book commenting on statutes, cases and text-writers, but a wide-ranging survey of the place of crime in eighteenth-century English society and the changing attitudes of legislators and judges towards it.

The book is divided into five main parts. Part I deals with the place of capital punishment in eighteenth-century criminal law; Part II with the administration of statutes imposing capital punishment; Part III with the leading currents of thought concerning the principles of punishment; Part IV with the beginning of the movement for reform from Fielding to Pitt; and Part V with the later growth of the movement from Romilly to Peel. There are in addition five most useful appendices — the third of them summarizing the views of foreign observers on the state of crime and the system of criminal justice in England is particularly illuminating — and a comprehensive bibliography, table of cases and statutes, and index.

Parts I and II reveal the divergence between law and practice in late eighteenth-century criminal justice. As Madan wrote in 1785, 'the law says they *shall be hanged*; those who are to put this law into execution, say — they shall *not*'. In short the *sic volo* of the legislature is absolutely controlled by the *sic nolo* of a Judge'. The more repeated the *sic nolo* and the more open 'the general conspiracy of benevolence,' the wider grew the gap between the policy of the legislature, which was to maintain and for a long time even to increase the number of capital statutes, and the attitude of those who were called upon to put the law into operation. The only real gainers from this eighteenth-century gap were the criminals, important enough in a turbulent London and an unpoliced state to constitute a *classe dangereuse*.

The movement for a reform of the criminal law had to batter not only against a theory — Paley's doctrine of maximum severity and all the many pamphlet versions of it — but also against practical difficulties in the way of providing satisfactory alternatives to capital punishment, which would offer effective guarantees of social stability in an age of economic change. Parts III, IV and V of this book describe the process of battering — the work of the theorists, men like Eden, Romilly and Bentham; the growing interest of the House of Commons in the question; the frequent rebuffs from the judges and the standstill House of Lords; and the growing realization outside Parliament that the existing system of criminal law was guaranteeing neither life nor, what was more important, property. 'We rest our hopes on the hangman,' said Fowell Buxton in 1821, 'and in this vain and deceitful confidence in the ultimate punishment of crime forget the very first of our duties — its prevention.' Peel's reforms of 1827, 1828 and 1830, despite their short life, marked the abandonment of the idea that crime could only be kept in check by the threat of death, even though capital punishment should in practice rarely be inflicted. With the abandonment of this position a new approach to criminal law was necessary, although as C. K. Allen has said, 'the primitive elements of criminal law are slower to disappear than the primitive elements of any other branch of law'.

All that Dr Radzinowicz says on these topics is definitive. The extradelight of

his book — and he shows that there can be a delight in criminal law even when it is treated very seriously — springs from his use of detail. Chapter 2 tells us all about the Waltham Black Act of 1722 with its frightful penalties for, among other things, destroying the heads of fishponds and maliciously cutting down trees. (We have already learnt on page 11 that in the early eighteenth century to be found in the company of gypsies and to kill a gypsy were punishable in the same way — by death.) The long struggle for the abrogation of the Black Act, which had originally, like many other measures, been passed as a local and an emergency enactment, was itself an important chapter in the history of the movement for the reform of the criminal law. Dr Radzinowicz persuades us that the illustrative detail is important as well as interesting. He does the same in Chapter 14 where he discusses the fascinating case of Dr Dodd in 1777.

Much of the interesting detail is contained in footnotes (e.g. the *Morning Herald's* comment on John Wesley's proposal to hang in chains the bodies of suicides, p. 217). At times the footnotes are over-worked. The author tries to be too comprehensive in dealing with many other matters besides criminal law, and his tremendous intellectual curiosity loses itself in a tangle of references.

None the less many of the details are extremely important to the social historian and new light is thrown in this study on criminal statistics (Chapter 5), the police idea, the folklore of public executions (Chapter 6), and the popular appeal of news of crime. According to Angelo, reminiscing in 1830, the *Newgate Calendar* 'experienced a ten times greater sale than either the *Spectator*, the *Guardian*, or the *Rambler*'. On the numbers of people present at public executions at Tyburn (p. 204), Dr Radzinowicz should remember the dangers of accepting unchecked estimates, particularly since he himself has already quoted Froude to the effect 'that no statements should be received with so much caution as those which relate to numbers'.

On one other matter, and it is an important one, Dr Radzinowicz seems sometimes uncritical. He accepts the concept of *public opinion* at its face value, particularly in the last part of the book, without relating it directly, except occasionally in footnotes, to the politics of the day. In fact Whig politics are always relegated to footnotes, even where they have a direct bearing on the narrative. *The march of public opinion* was a stock phrase of politics after the end of the Napoleonic War, and it must be examined critically. Dr Radzinowicz, in good company as his footnotes show, often talks of *the people*, *the crystallization of public opinion* (as in the Dodd case), and the *public conscience*, without making the terms clear. It is not enough to back them up with evidence from petitions presented to parliament by interested parties.

The concept of *public opinion* is as essential to Dr Radzinowicz's study as it was to Dicey, for it helps to unify the themes of politics, economics and law, but unless carefully examined it becomes an even more unsatisfactory tool than that of *class*. Fortunately Dr Radzinowicz never falls into Dicey's magnificent error of blanketing diverse periods of history under convenient but misleading slogans. He is equally unwilling to rest content with sweeping generalizations like that of Sir Erskine May, who claimed that in eighteenth-century England, 'the lives of men were sacrificed with a reckless barbarity, worthier of an eastern despot, or African chief than of a Christian state'. Quite rightly he points out that 'the criminal law at any period of any country's development, is the outcome of the interplay of many complex factors'. All readers of Volume I of this impressive project would welcome similar studies of earlier periods of history — how fascinating they could be — and will await with interest the publication of the further volumes of Dr Radzinowicz's survey. The Pilgrim Trust is to be congratulated on making this long-term undertaking possible.

ASA BRIGGS

DAVID J. DALLIN: *Soviet Russia and the Far East*. Hollis & Carter, 30s. net.

This book, covering the period from 1931-47, is supplemented by another volume by Mr Dallin on Russia and the Far East from 1860-1930 which has already been published in the United States but not yet in this country. It is a straightforward account of Soviet relations with Japan, China and the buffer sub-states under disputed sovereignty and control. It has none of the secretiveness of one or two of the author's other works, in particular *Forced labour in Soviet Russia* and the earlier *Russia and Post-war Europe*, in which some of the most rare but plausible information went to waste owing to Mr Dallin's reticence about his sources. The present book depends on readily accessible material, very largely press reports in English and Russian, and Comintern periodical literature. There is, however, no presentation of the many conflicts of evidence which Mr Beloff has discussed in the chapters of his *Soviet Foreign Policy* covering the same ground in a more academic and more noncommittal way.

Mr Dallin writes as an unresigned opponent of Soviet expansion in Asia, ideological or territorial. He recognizes, as what may be called the Chatham House school have never done, that the Soviet *vlast* — the word significantly means both *potestas* and *imperium* — at no time has had any natural limits and that its moods of defensiveness, not those of ideological or military aggressiveness, have been the evidence of opportunism. It is indeed no tribute to the appeal of Communism or the success of the Soviet State to confuse 'socialism in one country' with satiety or a principle of consolidation in Asia or in Europe. But while there is therefore nothing necessarily superficial in treating Soviet ideological and diplomatic pressure as the theme of Soviet relations with the Far East, an almost entirely diplomatic and political narrative, such as Mr Dallin's, is liable to be inadequate. It explains well enough from the outside the phases of

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the Soviet policy of *reculs* and *meilleurs sauts* but it does not explain its success. This has been and is due, after all, not only to Soviet skill and power but to the misery and spontaneous ferment of Asian peoples or the impotence of Asian governments including those controlled from Europe. The revolution which overthrew the Manchu Empire actually preceded the revolution which overthrew the Tsarist Empire, and the challenge of the Communist order was thus from the first presented to a China already in dissolution, just as it has since been presented most effectively to peoples south of China in their state of disruption caused by the Japanese invasion.

Although Mr Dallin has made no serious attempt to deal with the social and moral conditions behind the Chinese and other Far Eastern peoples' reactions to Communist power, his book is a lucid and intelligent summary of events and a plausible account of their political connections. His explanation of the Soviet entry into the war against Japan in 1945, in particular, is useful as a succinct statement of the case for the American school of critics of Yalta and Potsdam diplomacy; it may serve to remind readers in this country how far more important in world history the consequent abandonment of Manchuria to Communism is likely to have been than the abandonment of Poland. On the state of the territory in the Far East actually absorbed by the Russians before these recent cessions Mr Dallin does not add much to our general information. Whether economic, demographic or strategic questions are concerned, any plausible observations about the Soviet Far East, in particular since 1939, must be put in the form of balanced conjecture and Mr Dallin has a preference for categorical statement.

Considering the usefulness of this book as a first instance source of facts it is a pity that the index is one of those examples of wasted labour spent on listing copious references to proper names without any indication of context, and instead of references to subjects.

M. VYVYAN

GOTTLÖB FREGE: *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik: The Foundations of Arithmetic.*

Translation by J. L. Austin. *Basil Blackwell, 16s. net.*

The translator and the publisher have performed a valuable service in making this important work of Frege's available. The value of this book is two-fold. Firstly the increasing interest shown in the history of human thought and science — more sublime than the history of human actions, of which we have had our fill — and the increasing interest which is being taken in symbolic logic, mean that many will welcome the opportunity of having a copy of this classic upon their shelves. Secondly the original German is reprinted and facing each page is the translation. The translation is, of course, of value only to those whose knowledge of the German language — though it may be good enough for ordinary purposes — is not adequate for works of a philosophical character. It is accurate practically without omissions or emendations and it runs nearly always sentence for sentence. Those whose knowledge of German is reasonably good but not perfect can readily refer to the original on the facing page (and usually at exactly the same level) if they have reason to doubt the translation. To this class will belong the majority of readers of this book and hence the wisdom of the decision to print the original version and the translation on pages facing each other.

Frege is certainly coming into his own after having been neglected in his lifetime. Recently there have appeared two independent translations of *Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung* into English, and also a translation of this and the *Grundlagen* into Italian. It is to be hoped that someone will publish a photostatic reproduction of Frege's *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* and of the *Begriffsschrift* with a translation (on pages facing each other) of the introductory matter including the note at the end of vol. II of the *Grundgesetze*. For it is an essential part of Frege's work to have a *Begriffsschrift*, weird and wonderful as Frege's is.

Mr Austin has wisely effaced himself and made a minimum of remarks of any kind. But why try to translate a made-up word or a word used in some (possibly not fully defined) special sense peculiar to the work in hand? Thus, why not leave words like 'gleichzählig', 'Begriffsschrift' etc. as they are? Most readers will know enough German to form their own judgment of the intended meaning. It is at only one or two places that the translation reads oddly: why not 'operation of increasing by one' instead of 'increase by one'; and 'Series in general ψ ' should be 'in a general ψ -series'. 'No thing' should be distinguished from 'nothing' in a work of this character. What is the centre of gravity of the solar system? Frege does not mention it. 1000 1000 1000 is not the translation of 1000 (1000 1000) 'Leathery judgment' is more nonsensical than the translators' 'tough judgment' though this is perhaps more accurate.

S. W. P. STEEN

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The first two volumes to appear deal with the controversies involved in the American Revolution and the more violent storm of political debate precipitated by the outbreak of the French Revolution. Mr Beloff's anthology is in some respects more satisfactory than Dr Cobban's, partly because he is able to proceed on the principle that the champions of American resistance and — eventually — of American independence were Englishmen even when they were colonists, so that he is able to present both sides of the great controversy. Dr Cobban, on the other hand, being unable to claim that Frenchmen are Englishmen, must rely on Tom Paine as his leading Jacobin and on Edmund Burke as the chief counsel for the prosecution. The books differ considerably in other respects too. Mr Beloff's is composed of much larger and more coherent excerpts, Dr Cobban's of a much greater number (six times as many) small excerpts from more miscellaneous sources. Some of the extracts, indeed, are so very brief — a mere few lines from John Cartwright or from the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* — that it is doubtful whether they add much to the whole picture. Dr Cobban's volume is, moreover, more than half as large again as Mr Beloff's, and there is every sign that his sources were more intractable, and less amenable to such pillaging of pearls. But taken together they form an extremely valuable account of the most significant political ideas of the late eighteenth century. And Dr Cobban has had the satisfaction of making available materials which are much less accessible — letters, pamphlets and radical resolutions — than are the writings of Fox, Burke, Chatham and Paine on which Mr Beloff inevitably mainly relies. Each editor contributes a concise and very admirable introductory essay on his subject, as well as a useful bibliography. The series has started well, and 'the debate continues.'

DAVID THOMSON

THE WORLD OF LEARNING 1950, Third edition, Europa Publications, £3 net.

Although its title is at first glance somewhat pretentious, this volume, the first edition of which appeared in 1947, really does perform a valuable function. It provides detailed information about educational, scientific and cultural institutions throughout the world, classified on a geographical basis. The various chapters give detailed information about academies, learned societies, research institutions, libraries and archives, museums and art galleries, universities, colleges and technical institutes in each country. The names of the members of the leading academies and learned societies, of the presidents and secretaries of other societies and associations, of directors of research institutions, librarians and archivists, museum curators, university rectors, deans and professors, and heads of technical institutes, are included; and other useful reference data included are the titles of publications issued by them.

New features of the present edition are a chapter on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), giving its origins, aims, functions and organization, and also an account of its recent activities; and (a very welcome addition) a complete index of institutions.

A compilation of this nature, comprising 875 closely printed quarto pages, cannot fail to contain some inaccuracies; its anonymous editors are confronted with the task of checking information from all quarters of the world and their accuracy is necessarily dependent on the speed, accuracy and co-operation of many others. In some cases, such as China, for example, it is virtually impossible to obtain up-to-date information. If due allowances are made for the fact that no compilation of this sort can ever fairly claim to be completely up to date the editors seem to have done a very thorough piece of work.

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Volume III of *The Cambridge Journal* are now available at a price of 5s. each (postage 2d. extra). Orders, accompanied by a remittance, should be sent to the Publishers.

NEVILL COGHILL: *The Poet Chaucer*. Oxford University Press, 5s. net.

NEVILL COGHILL: *Visions from Piers Plowman*. A New Rendering of Langland's Original. Phoenix Press, 12s. 6d. net.

Mr Coghill has a two-fold reputation: not only has he adapted Chaucer to the radio with complete success, but he has become, since the death of R. W. Chambers, the leading authority on Langland in this country. His witty and lucid versions of the *Canterbury Tales* have brought Chaucer to perhaps thousands of people who knew nothing about the Middle Ages. The few hundreds of students who try to read *Piers Plowman* are also in his debt: in a series of articles and particularly in his Gollancz Lecture to the British Academy, *The Pardon of Piers Plowman* (1945), he has been most helpful in solving the fearful problems in which the middle part of the poem abounds.

His book on Chaucer is an admirable introduction. Mr Coghill writes in a most mellifluous lecturer's rhetoric, and gives a clear and full account of Chaucer's life and poetic development. He explains medieval allegory very well; is excellent on the minor poems, especially the *Legend of Good Women*, and very good on Chaucer's treatment of marriage, as shown in the series of Tales ending with the Franklin's (and here he silently and rightly contradicts Mr C. S. Lewis, who makes out in the *Allegory of Love* that Spenser was the first poet to have sensible views on marriage). Mr Coghill is interesting on Chaucer's visual sense, especially on the heraldic quality of his imagery; but I cannot follow him when he says that Chaucer 'prophesies' certain Italian Renaissance painters. He compares the hunting scene in the *Book of the Duchess* to an Uccello; but it seems to me that here Chaucer is not being descriptive in a Renaissance manner, but rather invoking the atmosphere of the Fairy Hunt and the Fairy Wood of the romances and lays.

Mr Coghill is perhaps a little misleading about courtly love and its origins. 'Such were the chief virtues of courtly love, taming and civilizing the healthy male, and for these virtues it was esteemed even though it was recognized at the same time to be sinful when they thought as Christians.' Not only is this bad grammar, but the fact that the antecedent of 'they' is not stated shows a muddle. Are 'they' the devout churchmen, who were completely opposed to courtly love, since as good medieval Catholics they were bound to be puritans? Or do 'they' include the Troubadours, the inventors of courtly love who were in extremely bad odour with the Church? I suspect that Mr Coghill is trying to persuade us that the people of the Middle Ages were all much the same in faith and ideas; and that he has toned down the conflicts between lay and religious thought which are so marked in Chaucer's age. He has accordingly toned down Chaucer's agnosticism, his interest in 'science' and deterministic philosophy, just as he minimizes the sharpness and, under the smooth irony, the accurate moral analysis of Chaucer's satire, his refusal to forgive the Pardoner. In the end we are led by Mr Coghill to the old and misleading assertion of Chaucer's 'tolerance': he shows... 'a whole society in being, united by common purposes and moving towards a happy end in a dominant mood of easy goodwill (roguery notwithstanding)...' and again; 'A Swiss cathedral organist once described himself to me thus; "*Oui, je suis catholique, mais pas très aigu*" and I thought at the time how well the phrase would have pleased Chaucer, a catholic but no zealot.' But this does not explain the fact that Chaucer's anti-clericalism was so strong that he gained the reputation of a Lollard after his death, or Chaucer's own repudiation, in his death-bed retraction, of most of his early works as 'lecherous lays'. There is also a slight weakness in the exposition of Chaucer's 'world-picture', including the background of astrology and physiognomy and in the treatment of folklore and medieval narrative; but that will not prevent this book from taking its place as the best of its kind.

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Visions from Piers Plowman is also an admirable introductory study. It contains a very useful short account of Langland's life, of the A, B and C texts, of the allegorical method and of the themes and structure of the poem — all completely authoritative and lucid. But its chief interest lies in Mr Coghill's translation of extracts into modern English, using the same alliterative verse-form as Langland. This is a considerable *tour de force*, accurate and idiomatic, but rather uneven in literary quality. The opening is shaky:

In a summer season, when soft was the sunlight,
I shook on some shreds of shepherd clothing
And habited like a hermit, but not a holy one.

The obscurity and awkwardness of the second and third lines might well put off a casual reader for ever. But the general level is much higher than that. The Deadly Sins, for example, come over with vigour:

[Glutton] could neither step nor stand till he had his staff
And he blundered about like a blind man's bitch
From side to side, and sometimes backwards.
When he drew to the door there was a dimming in his eyes;
He tottered on the threshold and was thrown with a thump.

There are many felicities, especially in witty renderings of satirical passages:

Up came a confessor, coped like a friar
And faltered in a fluting confessional whisper

and the great moments, the visionary glimpses, are usually convincing:

'Dukes of this dim place, at once undo your gates
That Christ may come in, Son of the King of Heaven!
And with that breath, hell brake, and the bars of Belial.

Mr Coghill follows mainly the B text, compressing it a good deal and giving a few lines from A and some passages found only in C. In Part I he gives the Prologue and Passus I to VII, with the famous lines about the poor from C X. The next section is so confused and rambling in the original that Mr Coghill has despaired of explaining the argument: so he gives only the more interesting fragments of B VIII to XV; the poet's autobiography (including his self-portrait in C VI), his vision of the Order of Nature, his views on rich and poor, on salvation, etc. In Part III he returns to the great Christian epic of B XVI to XVIII (to the Harrowing of Hell), and the fourth 'Continent of meaning' goes to the end in B XX (the Coming of Anti-Christ). By selecting so carefully, Mr Coghill has removed the most awkward blemishes on the poem — the way in which Langland keeps returning to his *idées fixes* about marriage, poverty, good heathen, etc., and the obscure minor figures of Hawkin or Imaginative. He transmits the smoky paranoid vision of the prophet and illustrates it admirably by three reproductions of Blake and, better still, two of Samuel Palmer.

M. J. C. HODGART

ALEX COMFORT: *The Pattern of the Future*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 6s. net.

During the war, Dr Alex Comfort was one of the few controversial authors banned from speaking on the B.B.C. Officials frowned at his pacifism: his anarchism was hardly more popular. Last year, however, amends were made to him; and the text of four talks which he gave are now made accessible in book form.

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which we live, and whether these values are better derived from a belief in revealed religion or in man as our sole arbiter.

In his first talk Dr Comfort suggests that the European mind has now outgrown the Christian tradition in which it was nurtured. Christianity, he maintains, is incompatible with truths such as science purports to bring us. He next sets out to expound some basis for 'universal human values' beyond the limits of any specific nation, climate, culture or religion. The foundation of these he finally discovers in the morality of individual relationships. 'Do nothing', he writes, 'which increases the difficulties which any individual has to face, and leave nothing undone which diminishes them.'

His last two chapters are concerned with the two opposed types of society today: 'power-centred' and 'life-centred' communities; and the way in which societies embodying and practising these universal values (which are those, he tells us, of the 'life-centred' group) might be created in the future.

Now much which meets with Dr Comfort's censure cannot be thought of as free from defect. His alternatives, however, lack practical persuasion; and his arguments lose touch with reality through over-simplifying the issues in question. It is true, for example, that Christian dogma is no longer the potent force in the imaginative and spiritual which it was a hundred or two hundred years ago. None the less, it is still the Christian ethic which colours the moral conduct of 'everyman', the almost instinctive right-or-wrong responses of the often agnostic man-in-the-street. Now, science, too, has its doctrines; but they, on the whole, are the property of a higher educated specialist caste. The most that the ordinary man knows of science is a certain loose body of unco-ordinated facts, which hardly impinge on his moral sense. There is, as yet, no popular diffusion of a purely scientific code of behaviour; and Dr Comfort can hardly claim to provide one.

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Another error in this writer's thought is the way in which he draws a distinction that history certainly will not bear out. Man as 'governing' and man as 'governed' seem to Dr Comfort two different species: from the first, one can only expect abuse; from the second, unlimited sweetness and light. In this way, he attempts to distinguish between the laws and *mores* of a community, failing to recognize that the former is generally the codification of the latter, its formulation on a level of more complex and civilized existence. In any case, it would seem, both laws and *mores* are necessary prohibitive forces — the taboos of collective habitation; and as such unwelcome to our author. Somewhere, at some point, a comparative body of relative repressions must obviously operate. This, Dr Comfort will not concede. He is eager to restrain the power-instinct amongst a professional governing class, but gives no thought to the healthy suppression of 'self-expression' amongst the governed when it takes a destructive or anti-social turn.

Another difficulty that Dr Comfort has to face is the reconciliation of scientific leadership with ultra-democratic political faith. Believing, as he does, in a civilization predominantly 'bio-technic' in function, it is hard to see how a technical élite (a hierarchy of planners and research-workers) can play no greater governmental role than that of classes without their knowledge.

DEREK STANFORD

BOOKS RECEIVED

The inclusion of any book in this list does not preclude its review in a later issue

A. LESLIE BANKS: *Man and his Environment*. Cambridge University Press, 1s. 6d. net.

I. M. BOCHENSKI: *Der Sowjetrussische Dialektische Materialismus*. A. Franke, Bern.

BRITISH JOURNAL FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, Vol. I, No. 2. Nelson, 7s. 6d. net.

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